

# India, Iran to discuss pipeline

28/12/06  
G.D. - New York  
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\$7 billion Project, LNG Deal To Dominate December 28-29 Talks

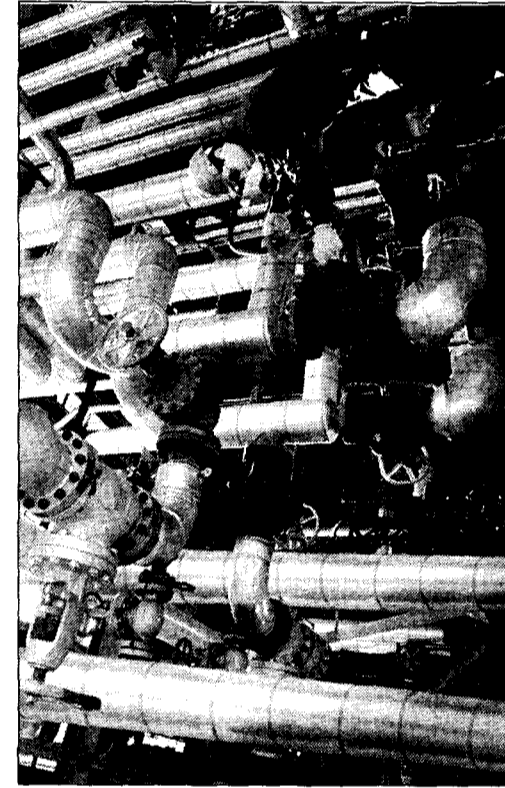
Mumbai: India and Iran will hold bilateral talks this week in New Delhi to discuss the progress of a proposed \$7 billion Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline and a separate liquefied natural gas deal between the two nations. Iran's deputy oil minister, Mohammad Hadi Nejad-Hosseini, is scheduled to participate in these discussions on Dec. 28 and 29, after arriving in India on Tuesday evening.

"The biggest challenge before us today is to find a way as to how do we structure the project in a consensual way," an official from the Indian oil ministry, who did not wish to be identified, told Reuters on Monday.

The official said the three countries had mutually agreed to set a four- to six-month target to finalise the tripartite agreement on the natural gas pipeline project.

"I can assure you that there is no change or delay in the schedule of finalising the project," he said, responding to a newspaper report at the weekend saying the pipeline project was likely to be delayed by six months.

"We have always maintained that



financial structure, measures to boost investor confidence and the price of the gas sold by Iran to India and Pakistan. "International support for the pipeline is least of our concerns as we have many multinational companies including Russia's Gazprom interested in our project," he said.

The pipeline faces opposition from the United States, which accuses Iran of seeking nuclear arms, funding anti-Israeli militias and stirring militant attacks against U.S. forces in Iraq.

Nicholas Burns, a top US state department official, said last month India had assured the United States that any plans to sign energy deals with Iran were "years away" and existed only in the hypothetical realm.

The official said representatives from all three countries would meet in Tehran in March to review progress in the project.

India, which imports 70% of the oil it consumes, is in talks to build gas pipelines from Myanmar, Iran and Turkmenistan to meet the growing energy needs of its expanding economy. Reuters

The proposal to build the pipeline has been on the drawing board for years but uneasy relations between nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India prevented any progress.

The official said discussions would revolve around four core issues, including technical specifications, fi-

given the complexity and technical nitty-gritties involved in the project we will finalise the details only by April or June 2006," the official said.

Pakistan and India said this month they hoped to start building the pipeline from Iran to South Asia by 2007 despite U.S. objections.

# India-Gulf business summit opens in Dubai

## Press Trust of India

DUBAI, Dec. 10. — The India-Gulf Business Summit opened here today, with the minister of state for overseas Indian affairs, Mr Oscar Fernandes drawing attention to India's transformation into an emerging force in the global economy.

Inaugurating the 'India Calling: India Gulf Partnership Summit 2005', which has attracted top business leaders from

India and the UAE, Mr Fernandes said the timing of the meet is crucial since in recent years, "India has transformed itself from a regional player into an emerging and dynamic force in the global economy... India is today one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with eight per cent growth in the last quarter of 2005.

Our target is to move steadily to achieve a growth rate in excess of 10 per cent in the near

future," he added.

"World GDP is estimated to have increased by 3.2 per cent in 2005 though down from 3.8 per cent in 2004, but India and China are growing very fast despite unprecedented oil price hikes and other macro-economic externalities. Indian industry and business have demonstrated resilience and robustness because of the wide-ranging reforms that we have pursued in recent times," the minister said.

The manufacturing sector has recorded double-digit growth while agriculture is beginning to show better performance. The external sector continues to remain a major source of strength for the economy, Mr Fernandes noted.

On purchasing power parity, the five biggest economies of the world are the US, China, Japan, India and Germany. "India is one of the major exporters of knowledge, skills and expertise," the minister said.

He said the ministry of overseas Indian affairs is working to establish an institutional framework for sustainable and mutually beneficial engagement with overseas Indians.

"We are working on establishing what we call the Overseas Indians Knowledge Network — an ICT driven platform that will facilitate exchange of knowledge, ideas and expertise between the home country and the overseas Indians," he added.

11 DEC 2005

THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

# Centre and Left think alike on Iran, finally

Stress The Need To Keep Issue In IAEA

**New Delhi:** In the face of the recent sharp warnings on the Iran nuclear issue by the Left parties, the government and the Left on Monday agreed that the matter should remain within the jurisdiction of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and not be referred to the UNSC.

"The government informed the Left parties of the progress made through diplomatic efforts (on the issue). It was noted that the Centre's intention was to ensure that the matter remained within the jurisdiction of the IAEA," finance minister P Chidambaram said after a meeting of the Left-UPA coordination committee, chaired by the PM.

CPI(M) politburo member Sitaram Yechury, who was also present at the meeting, said, "Our position has all along been that any dispute about Iran's nuclear capability should be kept within the confines of the IAEA

## Left okay on non-navratna PSUs

Left parties on Monday agreed to consider the Centre's proposals to divest a small percentage of equity in non-navratna profit-making PSUs on a case-to-case basis. "We have identified such PSUs and shared information with the Left parties. They have agreed to consider the proposals," finance minister P Chidambaram said. Agencies

and not taken to the UN Security Council. Iran is a signatory to the NPT and has its rights and obligations. The government has expressed its intention to make all diplomatic efforts to keep the issue within the confines of the IAEA and this concurs with the views always held by the Left." Agencies

# India welcomes efforts by Iran to address nuclear issues

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nbc

IAEA appreciates access to sites of interest

Diplomatic Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** India has welcomed "progress" made by Iran to address "outstanding issues" about its nuclear programme following a new report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on implementation of safeguards by Teheran.

According to IAEA Director-General, Mohammad Elbaradei's report, the Agency had been able to interview individuals involved in procurement and who were previously not made available. "It (the report) refers to additional documents being made available to the Agency in a

variety of areas. It appreciates access being given to sites of interest. Iran's approach has been described as more forthcoming," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement.

"We welcome the progress made in regard to various outstanding issues by Iran and see this as a vindication of our stand, expressed on September 24, 2005, advocating that more

time be given to enable us to reach a satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues," the Ministry said, justifying its anti-Iran vote.

## Resolve outstanding issues

Pointing out that the Director-General's report wanted additional assurances and more documents and access, the Min-

istry said: "We trust that Iran will continue to extend necessary cooperation to the IAEA to enable the Agency to resolve outstanding issues. This will contribute to the success of ongoing diplomatic efforts and India believes it is important for all concerned to avoid actions that may undermine these efforts."

The additional documentation and information already made available would shed greater light on clandestine activities of "foreign intermediaries" in particular Pakistan-based Abdul Qadeer Khan, which was of utmost concern to India as

this had "seriously affected" the country's national security.

"Greater clarity and transparency in this area is very much in India's interest. We believe that the principled position that we have taken on focusing on the sources as well as the recipients of clandestine (nuclear) proliferation has contributed to this development," the statement claimed.

The IAEA report comes days ahead of a scheduled meeting of the Agency's governing board on November 24 in Vienna, where the Iranian issue is expected to come up for discussion once again.

# ইরান নিয়ে প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে এ বারও ভোট দিতে পারে ভারত

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি ও নিউ ইয়র্ক, ১৮ নভেম্বর: বাম চাপ এবং আন্তর্জাতিক স্বার্থ—ইরান প্রক্ষে শেষ পর্যন্ত দ্বিতীয়টিকেই প্রাধান্য দিতে চলেছে মনমোহন সরকার।

এখনও পর্যন্ত যা ইঙ্গিত, ইরান প্রক্ষে আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু সংস্থার (আইএইএ) আসন্ন বৈঠকে শেষ পর্যন্ত ভোটাভুটি হলে ভারত আমেরিকা এবং ইউ-এর সঙ্গেই ভোট দিতে পারে। অবশ্য বৈঠকে ইরানের পরমাণু প্রকল্পের বিষয়টি সরাসরি রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে পাঠানোর প্রস্তাব পেশ হবে না কি আগের বারের মতো নরম-গরম প্রস্তাব আসবে, তা এখনও স্পষ্ট নয়। তাই কোনও চরম প্রস্তাবে ভারত সায় দেবে কি না, তা নিয়ে সরকারি মহল মুখ খুলছে না। আপাতত সরকারি সূত্র থেকে ইঙ্গিত, ২৪ সেপ্টেম্বরের বৈঠকে ইরান প্রক্ষে ভারত যে ভাবে ভোট দিয়েছিল অর্থাৎ আমেরিকা এবং ইউ-এর সঙ্গে, এ বারও তার ব্যতিক্রম হবে না।

এই সিদ্ধান্তের কথা দু'দিন আগে সীতারাম ইয়েচুরিকে জানিয়েও দিয়েছেন ইউপিএ চেয়ারপার্সন সনিয়া গাঁধী। সে ক্ষেত্রে বামেরা সংসদের ভিতরে এবং বাইরে আক্রমণের পথে গেলেও সরকারের পতনের সম্ভাবনা

নেই বলেই মনে করছে কেন্দ্র। আজ দিল্লিতে বৈঠকের পর বামেরা জানান, বিষয়টি নিয়ে সোমবার সমন্বয় কমিটির বৈঠক বসবে। তার পরেই পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ। সিপিএমের প্রবীণ নেতা জ্যোতি বসু বলেছেন, ২৪ সেপ্টেম্বরের ভোটের যাতে পুনরাবৃত্তি না হয়, সে জন্য বাম-সরকারের আলোচনা হচ্ছে।

ভারত অবশ্য রাশিয়া, চিনের সঙ্গে মিলে ভোটাভুটি এড়ানোরই চেষ্টা করছে। কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত ভোট হলে ভারত ভোটদানে বিরত তো থাকবেই না, বরং প্রস্তাবের পক্ষেই ভোট দিতে পারে বলে সরকারি সূত্রে জানানো হয়েছে। কারণ ভোট না দিলে বা প্রস্তাবের (এবং আমেরিকা, ইউ-এর) বিপক্ষে ভোট দিলে আন্তর্জাতিক মহলে ভারতের মুখ থাকবে না। ঘন ঘন অবস্থান বদলের অভিযোগ উঠবে। আমেরিকার সঙ্গে তিজতা তৈরি হবে। এ প্রসঙ্গে উঠবে, ভারত প্রথম বার আমেরিকার চাপে ভোট দিয়ে পরে বামেরদের চাপে সেই অবস্থান থেকে সরে এল। মনমোহন সরকার সেই প্রসঙ্গ তুলতে দিতে চায় না। ইরান অবশ্য ছমকি দিয়েছে, ভারত এ বারও তাদের বিপক্ষে ভোট দিলে প্রস্তাবিত গ্যাস প্রকল্প থেকে সরে যাবে তারা।

কেন্দ্র সেপ্টেম্বরের আইএইএ-র বৈঠকের পরেই দাবি করেছিল, আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ভোট দিলেও ইরানের বিপক্ষে তারা ভোট দেয়নি। বরং ইরানকে বাঁচিয়েছে। কারণ, আমেরিকা-ই ইউ-এর প্রাথমিক প্রস্তাবে ইরান প্রসঙ্গ নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে পাঠানোর কথা বলা হয়েছিল। পরে যে প্রস্তাবে ভোটাভুটি হয়, তাতে সংঘাতের বদলে আলোচনার মাধ্যমে সমস্যা সমাধানের চেষ্টা রয়েছে।

ইরান এখন আইএইএ-র সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা করলেও আমেরিকা এবং ইউকে চটিয়েই চলেছে। ইউরেনিয়াম প্রক্রিয়াকরণের কাজ তারা শুরু করেছে বলেছে আজ ইরান জানায়। এ দিকে, ইরান জানিয়েছে, তারা পাক পরমাণু বোমার জনক ও পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি পাচারকারী বৈজ্ঞানিক আব্দুল কাদের খানের কাছ থেকে পরমাণু মারণাস্ত্র তৈরির কৌশল জানতে পেরেছিল।

পশ্চিমী কূটনীতিকদের ধারণা, ইরাক যুদ্ধ নিয়ে নাজেহাল আমেরিকা এখনই ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে চরম কোনও পথ নিতে চাইবে না। তাই ইরানকে চাপে রেখেই অপেক্ষাকৃত নরম প্রস্তাব নিয়ে ভোট হতে পারে। সে ক্ষেত্রে প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে ভোট দিলেও আগের বারের মতোই যুক্তি দিতে পারবে কেন্দ্র।

# Iran envoy says LNG deal stands

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: Refuting media reports that Tehran was holding its LNG deal with New Delhi hostage to India's forthcoming nuclear vote at the IAEA, Iranian ambassador Siyavash Zargar Yaghoubi has clarified to the TOI that "all agreements with India are in force".

Yaghoubi said these were

agreements between sovereign nations and would be honoured. The ambassador's assurances that the LNG deal with India may be ratified by next month, though coming after Iranian energy officials' threat to call off

the deal if New Delhi did not switch its vote at the IAEA, has provided limited respite to the UPA government. It coincided with clear indications that the government was coming under a pincer attack from the US, on one end, and Left, on the other, on what stand to take on Iran's nuclear ambitions.

While the Left upped its ante to warn the government not to vote against Iran a second time, US ambassador David Mulford made it plain that the Bush regime may want the Manmohan Singh regime to do precisely the opposite.

Mulford told journalists on Monday that India had made a decision in September based on its "nation-

al interests" and "we expect India will assess the situation and make the next decision also on its national interests", indicating that Washington saw no reason for New Delhi to change its stand on the issue.

India is no longer a key player in this game, though India took credit for getting Tehran some breathing room after the September vote. Manmohan said recently that India

## How new deal works

India has been promoting the 'South Africa initiative' as a way out of Iran's nuclear conundrum—that Tehran get enriched nuclear fuel from Russia and return the spent fuel to it. The latest EU offer is a variant on the theme—so Iran gets its legal right to "conversion" of raw uranium to uranium hexafluoride, but stops short of enrichment. This is an improvement on the previous offer to Tehran whereby it was prohibited from conversion activity, which is its legal right under NPT rules. The offer, which will be made by IAEA chief Mohd El Baradei when he visits Tehran next week, is now on top of the list with the Iran government. TNN

dia has been talking to other countries to work out a "consensus"—sources said India was fully backing the EU proposal to Iran. But with a crucial nuclear

deal hanging in the balance in the US, India's not going to take any chances on Iran. The key to successful negotiation with Iran now lies with Russia and the EU-3.

The heat is off the Indian government—if Iran accepts the plan, there will be no real need to vote against Tehran on November 24 at the IAEA meet. Iran will be defanged and India can claim diplomatic victory. On the other hand, if Iran rejects it, Tehran's weapons aspirations will be exposed and India can slam it with a clear conscience. Recognising that India is unlikely to switch its vote, Iran has been concentrating its energies on Russia and China, both countries pushing the new plan.

## Israel spy satellite on Isro vehicle

PTI AND OUR BUREAU

**New Delhi, Nov. 12:** Israel has decided to launch its next spy satellite aboard India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rather than on its own indigenous Shavit rocket, according to a report in *SpaceNews*, the Washington-based weekly on global space business.

The report quoting Israeli officials in Tel Aviv said Israel's defence ministry and the state-owned satellite producer, Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), are finalising with Indian officials contractual agreements for the planned October 2006 launch of TECSAR, Israel's first synthetic aperture radar imaging satellite.

"On the government-to-government level, a pre-existing bilateral accord on strategic co-operation (between India and Israel) already covers most aspects of the mission," the report said. The estimated 260-kg TECSAR is slated as the exclusive payload on the PSLV, which will be launched from the Indian Space Research Organisation's Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, the report said.

Since 1999, India has launched four foreign satellites — a Belgian, a Korean, and two German — aboard the PSLV, which has emerged as Isro's commercial workhorse launcher. All four satellites were less than 100 kg in weight and flew as "piggyback passengers" with India's own remote sensing satellites as the main payloads.

India has also signed contracts for the launch of individual satellites for Indonesia, Italy and Singapore in the coming years.

# N-ISSUE ■ Natwar, Iranian Vice-President meet, say tactical move not to affect ties IAEA vote a 'minor difference'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MOSCOW, OCTOBER 27

INDIA and Iran have agreed that "minor" differences on Tehran's nuclear programme should not come in the way of their long-term relationship.

During the 30-minute meeting between External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and Iranian Vice-President Perviz Davoodi last night on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, both leaders are understood to have agreed that any 'tactical move' by the two sides ahead of the IAEA vote next month should not have any negative impact on bilateral ties.

It was reiterated that relatively minor differences at any point of time should not be allowed to stand in the way of the long-term vision of close political, economic and cultural relations between India and Iran, sources said.

Sources said "India reiterated its stated stand on NPT, while Iran insisted that as NPT signatory it wants the recognition of its legal right for the development of civilian nuclear energy".

Both positions were affirmed in the background of shared concern that India-Iran relations should continue to be steady and productive keeping in mind the long-term community of interests.

Singh, who was also accompanied by foreign secretary Shyam Saran at the meeting, lauded the Iranian statement at the SCO about Tehran's willingness to cooperate with IAEA.



External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh with the First Deputy President of Iran Perviz Davoodi on the sidelines of the meeting of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation leaders in Moscow on Wednesday. PTI

## Indo-Russian ties better than ever: Putin

DADAN UPADHYAY  
MOSCOW, OCTOBER 27

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin said today that the relation between Russia and India was at an unprecedented high.

"The relations between Russia and India are currently at unprecedentedly high level. Our political contacts are practically continuing uninterrupted," Putin said in his opening remark at the meeting with the visiting External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, at his presidential residence at Novo-Ogoryevo, outside Moscow.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Russia will be the "main event" of the year in bilateral relations, he said. Russia was preparing for this visit.

The talks between Singh and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zhukov, co-chairman of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC), was "a significant phase in preparations for the Indian Prime Minister's visit to our country," Putin said.

He also thanked Singh for taking part in the session of the Council of Prime Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

On his part, Singh told Putin that Wednesday's meeting of the 11th session of the IRIGC had been fruitful, as the sides discussed a broad range of issues and reached a consensus on most of them.

"The discussion of economic issues was

one of the most successful," the minister said. He also conveyed to the Russian President warm regards from President A P J Abdul Kalam, Singh and Congress President Sonia Gandhi.

Earlier, delivering a lecture at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Singh said New Delhi was against referring Iran's nuclear dossier to the United Nations Security Council.

"India wants the issue of Iran's nuclear programme to be addressed within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he said.

Asked about India's attitude towards possible US military action against Iran, Singh said India hoped the US will not repeat the mistake it made in Iraq.

INDIAN EXPRESS



# India faces Iran dilemma again

## Frantic Backroom Diplomacy On To Avoid Second Vote

By Diwakar & Indrani Bagchi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Faced with a stark warning from its Left allies not to vote against Iran a second time, the government is working feverishly to ensure that the European Union-3 (UK, France and Germany) resume their negotiations with Iran on the nuclear issue as soon as possible. The aim is that on November 24, when the IAEA governing board meets to decide Iran's fate, a vote on this issue can be avoided.

Although government has indicated to the Left parties that if faced with a vote on Iran again, India would vote the same way as it did on September 25—that is, against Iran—the UPA leadership is aware that this is fraught with high risk. For, CPM's unrelenting opposition on Iran indicates the Left could get uncompromising on the issue and that, in turn, would spell trouble for the government.

Top level government sources confirmed to TOI that India had been informally nudging both the EU-3 and Iran to restart negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme. The response from France and Germany has reportedly been satisfactory, while the UK has been somewhat lukewarm.

After the September vote, Iran refused to ratify the Additional Protocol and though promising to go back to the table, is yet to do so.

The best possible scenario for the UPA government will be one where the EU-3 reach a modus vivendi with Iran ahead of the November IAEA meet. Failing that, India would rather the Iran issue be deferred to a later date at the IAEA.

The matter has acquired urgency with the Left, which held Prime Minister Manmohan Singh directly responsible for "lining up" with the West against Iran, refusing to slacken its opposition. It had brushed aside the government's argument that India's decisior

actually bought time for Iran, and is sticking to its guns even after Iran protested initially the Indian vote, struck a conciliatory note by refusing to cancel lucrative LNG deals with India.

The Left has threatened to start a nationwide "movement" against India's foreign policy "mistake", and ties with UPA are sure to be bruised if they find the government arrayed once again against Iran at Vienna.

As it engages in some frantic diplomacy to ward off yet another policy squabble with the Left, it is clear that the government has quite a task on its hand. In fact, EU players have, at least publicly, hardened their stance, with the French foreign minister on Friday saying that referring Iran to the UN Security Council was a "real option". France was one of the countries most keen on a diplomatic approach.

Russia, however, remains opposed to referring Iran to the UN Security Council, as its foreign minister Sergei Lavrov informed his US counterpart Condoleezza Rice on Saturday.

INDIA

17 OCT 2005

# India, Iran and nuclear energy

The government's position is entirely in India's self-interest. The Left is showing greater concern for Iran than for India. There must be less domestic political noise on this matter, says S L Rao

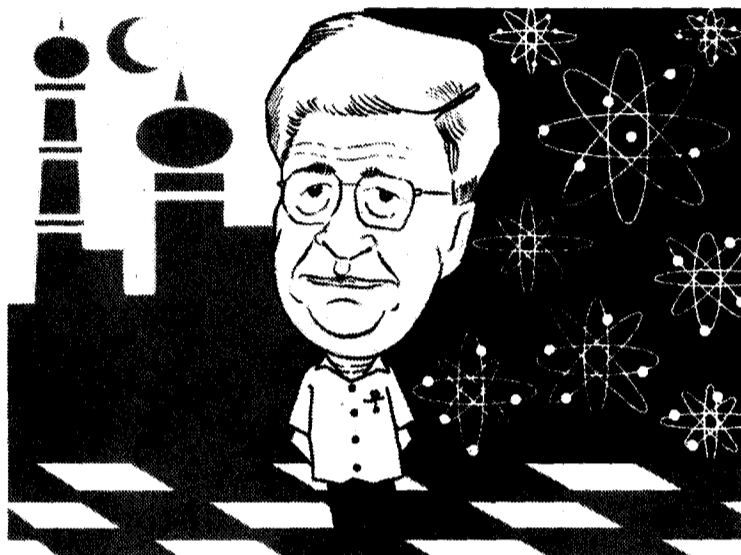
**T**HE Left parties are agitating against the government's agreeing to refer the alleged covert attempts by Iran to manufacture nuclear weapons to the UN Security Council. It is supposed to show the new hypocrisy in Indian foreign policy. We are said to be succumbing to pressure from the superpower. We are said to have abandoned a valued Third World friend.

The communists were against the Pokharan explosions. They were against spending resources while increasing the prospect of war. Indira Gandhi and Narasimha Rao had tried unsuccessfully to conduct further nuclear tests, while arguing against the bomb and the hypocrisy of the US. Our moralistic stand was that it was discriminatory that we were pressed to sign the comprehensive test ban treaty while the club of nuclear powers did not intend to abandon nuclear weapons. Now that we are a nuclear power (though not a formal member of the club) we are, like passengers in a third class, unreserved, long-distance train compartment, trying to keep fresh passengers (like Iran) from entering.

The nations already in the club seem to have accepted us as a nuclear power. All that remains is the anointing. This recognition is important to Indian government as a recognition of our status. It could give us permanent membership of the Security Council and a permanent invitation to the OECD.

Hypocrisy hidden as righteousness is integral to foreign policy. Countries acting in their self-interest might give their actions the colour of moral righteousness as the US is doing in its fight against Islamic fundamentalism.

Non-alignment and Third World solidarity have outgrown their utility after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The motley crowd of developing nations rarely acts in unison. The US' messy involvement in Iraq, Katrina, unbridled public expenditure, growing deficits, the declining US dollar, may all seem to mark the beginning of US decline. But



BONNY THOMAS

the fortunes of the world are tied to those of the US because of holdings in US treasury bonds. Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, India, European and oil producing countries will suffer from a US collapse. We can expect the US to take corrective action as it has done before. The Vietnam war saw deficit budgets, disaffection, massive hostile demonstrations, a vituperative Press and criticism overseas. But subsequent administrations successfully radically changed perceptions about the US. A nation that has continuous renewal of its population by hungry and ambitious immigrants, that is at the forefront of technological developments and keeps improving productivity, cannot be written off because of a few years of an inept presidency.

Was Iran ever a valued friend of India? Indeed, can we expect solid friendship from any country that calls itself Islamic and rises to defend the interests of only Muslims anywhere in the world? Iran's friendship with India was due to self-interest. Iran helped India in supporting the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. But that was in Iran's inter-

est. Iran's moderate stance on Kashmir is because it wants India's technology, markets and support. Iran pushed for an oil and gas pipeline to India through Pakistan before India or Pakistan did so. Large, long-term and assured sales to India give stability to Iran. No wonder Iran has been measured in its comments on Kashmir, Ayodhya, Gujarat killings, etc. Oil and gas sales to India are in Iran's interest.

**T**HERE are unquestionably serious security concerns for India from a gas pipeline through Pakistan with Iran as supplier. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto cheated on commitments made to Indira Gandhi after losing a war. Musharaff might be playing a similar game by tempting India to make Indian industries hostage to the supply of gas on the pipeline. As an Islamic fundamentalist state, Iran could become hostile any time. Experience suggests that neither Pakistan nor Iran can be trusted to stick to commitments.

Iran's nuclear ambitions were raised by A Q Khan's stolen technology — that too with China's help — which enabled

Pakistan to become nuclear. It is illogical that Iran with the world's second largest reserves of oil and gas wants nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. If however we recognise that Iran sees itself as the defender of Islam, its desperation to go nuclear is explicable. It is certainly not in our national interest for Iran or any Islamic countries to have the capability to produce nuclear bombs.

Referring Iran (which signed the NPT) to the UNSC is not comparable to our nuclear effort, since we did not sign the NPT. The nuclear opportunity that the US has given us puts us on the verge of being accepted in the Club of Five. Of course, the US is an unreliable and untrustworthy ally. But the Bush-Manmohan Singh agreement has already opened the nuclear doors of Canada and France to India. Others will follow. Now that there is this opening, it will be difficult for the US to close it again.

Supplies of oil and gas from Islamic countries will always be subject to blackmail. Prices will also rise further and make gas unaffordable as a fuel for power generation. We must accelerate our nuclear energy programme. Our domestic technology is inefficient; expensive; delayed and said to be unsafe. Separating civil and military nuclear programmes might make it less so.

The government's position is entirely in India's self-interest. The Left is showing greater concern for Iran than for India. There must be less domestic political noise on this matter. Government must be allowed to finesse its position so that we retain goodwill with everyone but ensure that we are able to rapidly increase nuclear power at affordable costs.

The government could have warned Iran about how it was going to vote. It should have consulted the NDA, as the previous government. But that would have meant consulting the Left parties also in advance and facing a definite veto from them. Political parties must consider the national interest than scoring political points on an issue so vital to India's interests.

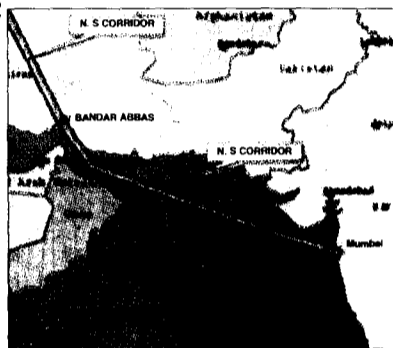
# 571 Roadmap to buy peace with Iran... ✓

Devirupa Mitra in New Delhi 7/10

Oct. 5. — Even as the government grapples with the Iran nuclear question with its Left allies railing against its stand, efforts are being made to revive a five-year-old international trade corridor, unutilised despite being convenient through Iran.

On 20-21 October, India will be hosting government officials of 14 countries at a meeting of the coordination council of the International North-South Transport Corridor, taking place after two years. The organisers were earlier worried about Iran's participation following the IAEA resolution as it was the key state in the N-S corridor. But, according to sources in the Iranian embassy, a team is scheduled to visit Delhi later this month.

The INSTC extends from the port of Mumbai to the southern Iranian port of Bandar-abbas, before stretching by road and rail links to the Caspian Sea ports of Amirabad and Bandar Anzalia and reaching the Russian port of Astrakhan by boat (See map). The N-S corridor was promoted as being 30 per cent faster and cheaper than the traditional, circuitous naval route through the Arabian Sea, Suez Canal, and the



Mediterranean Sea to reach the ports of Helsinki and St Petersburg.

In September 2000, India, Iran and Russia first brought up the matter of the corridor and seven more members, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Oman, Syria, Armenia and Azerbaijan, joined them. Four other applications, of Bulgaria, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey await scrutiny.

But, even after five years, the level of interest displayed by the initiative-taking countries does not seem to be way above the rudimentary one. Iran, has been the only country to have made some investment as the major part of the corridor goes through the nation.

A senior MEA official said that psychological barriers were stopping exporters from using this route.

# Natwar prefers Iran

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 7. — External affairs minister Mr Natwar Singh said India will continue to strengthen “mutually beneficial” links with Iran “in a manner consistent with our national interest”.

Launching a book on Iran at a function today, Mr Singh said India, which had “always wanted very good relations” with Iran, had done everything in the past to help its Persian friends. India had voted “yes” in a resolution in the IAEA which condemned Iran for not complying with the NPT and reserved the power to refer Iran to United Nations Security Council. Iran had reacted by stating that it was “surprised” and “disappointed”, but had backed off from taking a very strident line against India.

Sources in South Block said India was “keeping its options open” for the November meeting of the board

of governors in IAEA where the subject of referring Iran to the UNSC might come up.

Senior MEA officials pointed out that if India had backed out from the vote after negotiating for diluting the earlier resolution, it would have lost its “bargaining power” vis-à-vis western nations. “Now, we can talk to them as equals and negotiate better,” an official said.

The foreign minister steered clear of the controversial topic at the book launch, preferring to articulate the usual platitudes.

Stating that India has always taken a “helpful stand” on matters relating to Iran, Mr Singh added that history has demonstrated that “contradictions are best dissolved with engagement, dialogue and cooperative effort of concerned parties with a view to sincerely implement the commitments made”.

He was releasing a book, *Iran Today*, edited by former Ambassador to Iran, Mr Hamid Ansari.

# A vote under U.S. pressure: Left

At meeting with Prime Minister, its leaders express fears that Iran ties will be hit

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The Left parties on Wednesday registered their "strong protest" over India's vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency meeting and expressed apprehension that it would affect New Delhi's relations with Teheran.

Asserting that the decision was taken under U.S. pressure, the Left parties told Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that India should not have voted against Iran especially as both Russia and China had abstained.

"We told the Prime Minister that you have come under pressure of the United States. We are unhappy with the vote and think it will hamper India-Iran diplomatic and economic relations ... the vote could have been avoided and we have registered our strong protest," Revolutionary Socialist Party MP and Central Committee member Abani Roy told correspondents here.

Communist Party of India general secretary A.B. Bardhan, national secretary D. Raja and Communist Party of India (Marxist) Polit Bureau member Sitaram Yechury are the other Left leaders who participated in the breakfast meeting at the Prime Minister's official residence. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and other officials were also present.

Mr. Raja said the Left parties clearly conveyed their differences with the Government.

## Clarification needed

The Left leaders drew atten-



**STRONG PROTEST:** Left party leaders Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M) flanked by D. Raja (CPI) and Abony Roy (RSP) interacting with the media after meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh regarding the vote against Iran in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

tion to reports in *The Hindu* that Iran had conveyed to India that the \$21-billion liquefied natural gas export deal was off. Mr. Roy said a clarification on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project was also needed in the wake of U.S. statements objecting to it.

Mr. Yechury said India should assure the world that the Iran issue would not figure in the United Nations Security Council. The vote at the IAEA meeting was not of any consequence to the final outcome; it was a positioning vote giving an impression that India had aligned with

the U.S.

Mr. Mukherjee acknowledged that there were differences between the Government and the Left parties on the issue.

The Congress defended the Government's decision and expressed confidence that the historic relations between India

and Iran would not be affected.

Party spokesperson Jayanti Natarajan said the Government's stand was dictated by India's well-being and peace in world. India's stand helped Iran, as the issue was not referred to the Security Council immediately as had been demanded.

THE HINDU

# Iran "not calling off" LNG deal

India not calling

HD7

29/9

"We did not expect India to [vote that way]. But friends should not be judged by a single action."

Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI:** The \$ 21 billion agreement between Iran and India for the export of five million tonnes of liquefied natural gas is "still in force and passing through ...[its] normal process," the Iranian Embassy in New Delhi stated in a press release. Meanwhile, the BBC has reported Ali Agha Mohammadi of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) as saying Iran had no plans to withdraw from the LNG export deal.

Referring to Indian media reports on the possibility of the LNG export deal and the gas pipeline project being called off, the press release declared that "the agreements arrived at between the two countries are still in force and passing through their normal process." Giving some background, the Iranian Embassy quoted Ali Larijani, secretary of the SNSC, as saying the resolution passed by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency "lacks legal foundation and Iran expects the member states to review it." As for India's vote for the resolution, Mr. Larijani added: "We did not expect India to do so. [But] I believe the friends should not be judged by a single action. Iran enjoys friendly relations with India."

Earlier, the Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson confirmed that "we are aware of the remarks made by the Iranian Ambassador to our Ambassador in Vienna," but added that in high-level interactions in New Delhi, "we have been given no indication of Iran's intentions to review its longstanding and extensive cooperation with India."

The first part of the official spokesperson's statement relates to an exclusive report published in *The Hindu* on a September 24 communication from Vienna by the Indian Ambassador on Iran's decision to call off the LNG export deal, in the wake of India's vote at the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors meeting. The second part refers to subsequent interactions between the Foreign Secretary and the Iranian Ambassador in India.

The official spokesperson's statement reads:

"We are aware of the remarks made by the Iranian Ambassador to our Ambassador in Vienna. We have also seen remarks made by the Iranian spokesman concerning economic cooperation with countries that had vot-

ed in favour of the resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme at the IAEA.

"The Foreign Secretary [Shyam Saran] has met the Iranian Ambassador in Delhi [Siavash Zargar Yaghoubi] and explained the background to our decision to vote in favour of [the European Union] EU-3 resolution at the IAEA. The importance which India attaches to maintaining traditionally close relations with Iran have also been reiterated. We have been given no indication in these interactions of Iran's intentions to review its long-standing and extensive cooperation with India which is of benefit to and in the interest of both countries."

Left leaders meet PM: Page 12

## Teheran moves to halt IAEA snap inspections

**TEHERAN:** Iran's conservatives-controlled Parliament took a first step on Wednesday toward halting snap inspections by the UN nuclear watchdog of its atomic facilities.

They voted to give priority in Parliament to a bill to halt the inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under an additional protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

But the process can still take several weeks as the text must first go to a specialised

commission before being examined by MPs.

The move by the MPs aims to show Iran's determination after an IAEA resolution passed on Saturday finding Teheran in "non-compliance" with nuclear proliferation safeguards.

A finding of non-compliance is an automatic trigger for referral to the United Nations Security Council.

But referral would come only after a new report by IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei, probably in November. — AFP

# LNG deal is off: Iran

Handwritten notes: "Iran", "110-1-100", "28/9", "Iran", "Iran".

## A blow to India's energy security

Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI:** Iran has informed India that the five-million-tonne a year Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) export deal, with deliveries scheduled to begin in 2009 for a 25-year period, is off. This was conveyed to Indian officials in Vienna soon after the anti-Iran vote cast on Saturday by New Delhi in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) governing board.

In a communication to the Prime Minister's Office and South Block dated September 24, India's Permanent Representative in Vienna, Sheelkant Sharma, wrote that his Iranian counterpart had told him the LNG deal, signed between the two sides in June, was off.

The Iranian Ambassador in Vienna came up to Dr. Sharma after India's vote and conveyed a message from Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, that Teheran was no longer willing to go ahead with the \$21-billion deal.

With this, India's energy security has suffered a major blow. The June agreement was considered a good deal for India; in the variable component of the price

formula the Brent price of crude was capped at \$31 a barrel.

In September, during External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh's visit to Iran, India was told that the deal was through and that permission from the National Iranian Oil Company board would be forthcoming.

The Ministry spokesman said on September 3 that Iran was considering an additional 2.5 million tonnes of LNG a year being sought by India. On September 2, Mr. Larijani said in Teheran: "The issue of exporting LNG to India has been finalised."

On Monday, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, asked whether India's vote against Iran would affect the country's energy security, said, "I see no reason why there should be ... any kind of impact on our energy security."

In Teheran, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman expressed surprise on Tuesday at the manner in which India had voted. He said: "Iran will revise these [economic] relations, and these countries [that voted against Teheran in the IAEA] will suffer. Our economic and political relations are coordinated with each other."

### Iran upset over India's stance

Diplomatic Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran met Iran's Ambassador to India Siavash Zargar Yaghoubi on Tuesday and informed him that New Delhi had tried to act in Iran's interests in the International Atomic Energy Agency governing board on

Saturday.

According to diplomatic sources, Mr. Yaghoubi told Mr. Saran that Teheran was very disturbed by India's stance. It was surprising that a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement such as India had voted against another member nation like Iran, Mr. Yaghoubi reportedly said.

28 SEP 2009

THE HINDU

# Delhi says vote on Iran helps Tehran, gives room for talks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 26

UNDER attack from Left allies for voting in favour of the EU-3 resolution on the Iran nuclear issue at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting, the Government today sought to clarify that changes were made in the resolution following Indian efforts to give more time for consultations and this, in effect, will help Iran's cause.

Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, who returned from New York last night, explained that India had identified two key objectives at the IAEA Board meeting in Vienna. First, not to let the matter get an immediate refer-

## Jaswant differs with Yashwant on Iran

NEW DELHI: Differences within the BJP on India's decision to vote against Iran on the IAEA resolution came to the fore on Monday with former foreign minister Jaswant Singh openly disagreeing with his colleague Yashwant Sinha who attacked the UPA govt for making "India a client state of the US." Jaswant Singh said: "India is not a country that can be subordinated."

ence to the UN Security Council as that would have led to confrontation with Iran threatening to walk out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and "rubbish" the IAEA additional protocol.

Second, Saran added, was

the point emerging from non-aligned countries that more time be given to negotiations, especially when there is now a new government in Tehran.

"We felt that we had, in fact, made a successful effort in persuading the EU-3 (Britain, France and Germany) to concede on these two matters because if they had not conceded... then there was very much a likelihood of a confrontation developing."

On not abstaining, he pointed out that the two main issues raised by India had been addressed in the resolution. "Having got them to agree to what we wanted, and then to say that we will abstain on the resolution, would not have been a correct position for us to make."

23 SEP 2008

INDIAN EXPRESS



## 52 1 Punish-India cry in Iran

NEW DELHI, Sept. 26. — Stung by India's 'yes' vote to approve the draft resolution at the IAEA that could refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council by November, Iranian diplomats here said they had been "surprised" by India's "unexpected" stand. And while Iran hasn't commented officially, politicians haven't been shying away from airing their views. The chairman of the Majlis (Iranian parliament) energy committee, Mr Kamal Daneshyar, has been quoted

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as saying that India ought to be "punished", asserting that Iran should only encourage economic ties with countries that have "sincere and brotherly relations" with Teheran. "This would be a response to countries that stab us in the back despite having major economic ties with with us... on that list is India." Teheran, apparently, had no inkling that India would be going along with the EU and the USA, rather than abstaining. "We were not told about it (vote)

before hand," said a senior embassy official. He added, referring to the Indian explanation for approving the resolution: "The justification is not enough. We hope Delhi refines its position in future (read November)." In another development, the IAEA today confirmed the appointment of Md ElBaradei as director-general for a third term after the USA had dropped its objections — as a "reward for his compliance", claimed critics — to his continuance. — SNS

# India spoke for Iran, says Shyam Saran

## Persuaded EU-3 not to refer it to the United Nations Security Council

Diplomatic Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Two days after triggering a domestic political storm by voting for an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution that said Iran was not complying with the IAEA statute, India claimed on Monday that much of its diplomatic effort was made "on behalf" of Teheran.

Revealing that India was in touch with the Foreign Minis-

ters of Germany, France and Britain as well as Iran, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran told presspersons that India was successful in persuading the European Union "three" not to refer Iran immediately to the United Nations' Security Council, and allow time for discussions.

"Having got them [the EU-3] to agree to what we wanted, then to say we will only abstain on the resolution, would not have been the correct position for us to take," Mr. Saran said. Asked whether India had shifted gear to a more pro-West foreign policy, Mr. Saran said, "I do not think that you should interpret India's position as being aligned on the left or on the right or aligned with this [or that] group of countries. ... The question of this representing a shift in India's foreign policy does not arise."

He conceded that uranium conversion by Iran did not constitute a violation of the Nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty. "It is not. I have already said it is not," he said.

Mr. Saran saw no reason why India's energy security would be affected following the IAEA vote.

"We have been playing a role which has been supportive of Iran. I see no reason why there should be apprehension that there would be any kind of impact on our energy security."

Asked whether the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline was in the national interest, Mr. Saran said, "[I think the decision con-

cerning the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline is a decision which will be taken on the basis of the economic viability of the project.

"If this is a project which will enhance India's energy security, if it is a project which is going to be economical from India's point of view, certainly it would be in our national interest and we would go ahead."



# Tricky Tehran left Delhi cold

just left Amn N

## India turned off by Iran's NPT rebuff, bellicose nuclear stand

**PRAMIT Pal Chaudhuri**  
New Delhi, September 25

INDIA'S DECISION to vote in favour of the International Atomic Energy Association resolution on Friday was made easier by an earlier rebuff New Delhi suffered at Iran's hands. A week before the vote, Iran and Egypt had joined hands to get the United Nations 60th anniversary outcomes document to incorporate a line demanding that the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty be made compulsory for all countries.

Though the target was Israel, it was also a red rag for India. If India

signed the NPT it would have to surrender its nuclear weapons. New Delhi did not want this to be labeled a UN goal, even in a symbolic document. "Iran's response was that was just too bad. Hitting out at Israel is more important," says a diplomatic source.

This was galling given that Iran had repeatedly said it expected New Delhi to abstain at the IAEA vote, which in its final form put off referring Iran's to the UN Security Council. India was already wary because of the damage Iran's nuclear policy was doing to India's carefully maintained reputation for nuclear responsibility.

### THE IRAN VOTE

New Delhi was investing in reinforcing that image by passing a WMD anti-proliferation law and accepting Nuclear Suppliers Group standards. Tehran was doing the exact opposite. Worse, Iran was insensitive to Indian concerns, declining to consult about provocative actions like breaking IAEA seals. New Delhi in contrast went to great pains to brief Iran on its IAEA stance. In return, Iran's line was: "You must support us, but

don't expect anything in return." India faced a similar problem with Russia, China and Pakistan, the leaders of the "abstain vote" group. All of them provided Iran with nuclear and missile parts and designs. "Abstention would have put us with this lot," noted an official. That Iran did not bother to distance itself from the land of A.Q. Khan, from whom it had bought centrifuges, did not help. That abstention would have killed off any chances of US congressional support for the Indo-US nuclear deal only helped to further tip the balance in New Delhi against Iran. The bottomline: Iran's record show-

ed it didn't care if its actions were ruining India's nuclear interests.

Nonetheless India played a crucial role in watering down the IAEA resolution. It was India that argued for the issue to be kept within the IAEA and referral to the UNSC be delayed. German foreign minister Joschka Fischer rang up foreign minister Natwar Singh just before the vote to say the new resolution had incorporated all of India's demands. At this point, for India to have opposed the resolution would have made the country a laughing stock. India believes it did a lot for Iran, but it doesn't expect any thanks.

# No-choice Delhi votes with US

G.A. K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Sept. 24: Caught between the devil and the deep sea, India today decided to make the best of a bad situation.

India voted with the European Union and the US on a resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna requiring Iran to be reported to the UN Security Council at an unspecified date for failing to clear doubts about the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme.

For South Block, it was one of the most difficult decisions in Indian foreign policy since an equally controversial decision about a decade ago to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

India's decision on the Iran crisis went through a roller-coaster of ups and downs in the last few days.

At the New York Palace hotel in the Big Apple, foreign secretary Shyam Saran had set up a virtual operations room since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh returned home on September 16.

There Saran was joined yesterday by South Block's pointman for the US, S. Jaishankar. Foreign minister Natwar Singh has also been in New York.

From his temporary operations headquarters in the New York Palace hotel, Saran remained in constant touch with Sheel Kant Sharma, India's permanent representative to the UN in Vienna,

including the IAEA.

How crucial was India's vote today at the IAEA is obvious from the response of the US delegation to its outcome.

As soon as the vote was over, Matt Boland, spokesman for the US delegation to the IAEA, came out and told reporters that the fact India backed the resolution showed Delhi shared the "concern with Iran's established pattern of deception".

What Boland did not say was that before India voted, it had engaged in intense negotiations with France, Germany, Britain and the US to ensure that they did not ride roughshod over Iranian interests.

At India's behest, the Europeans amended their resolution, which initially called for

an immediate reference to the UN council. They also agreed, at India's request, to give more time within the IAEA for negotiations.

Once these were done, South Block took the view that it would be churlish to vote against a resolution, where Indian concerns have been accommodated. It also became clear that only Venezuela would vote against the resolution.

The alternative for India was to abstain like Russia and China, but it was felt that after all the efforts to secure a compromise resolution, it was pragmatic to vote.

Yesterday, the Iranian President had called Singh, who advised Tehran to take a "flexible" position.

25 SEP 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

# কূটনীতির পথেই ইরান সমস্যার রফা চায় ভারত

সীমা সিরোহি • নিউ ইয়র্ক

১৬ সেপ্টেম্বর: ইরানের খাতিরে ভারতের জাতীয় স্বার্থ জলাঞ্জলি দিতে রাজি নন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ভারতের অসামরিক পরমাণু সমঝোতার উপরে কোনও আঁচ আসুক, চাইছেন না তিনি। কিন্তু সঙ্ঘাতের মধ্যে না গিয়ে গোটা ব্যাপারটি যাতে কূটনৈতিক পথেই সমাধান হয়ে যায়, তার উপরেই প্রধানমন্ত্রী জোর দিচ্ছেন। মনমোহনের নীতি মনে ধরেছে জর্জ বুশেরও।

ইরানের সঙ্গে সরাসরি সঙ্ঘাতের পথে গেলে শুধু রাজনৈতিক নয়, ভারতের সামনে দেখা দেবে অর্থনৈতিক সমস্যাও। ভারতের বহুসংখ্যক শিয়াপন্থী মুসলিম জনতার কথা তো মাথায় রাখতে হবেই, সেই সঙ্গে খেয়াল রাখতে হবে বিশ্ববাজারে তেলের দাম বাড়ার কথাটাও। ইরানের পরে এ বার ইরান নিয়েও যদি আন্তর্জাতিক ক্ষেত্রে সমস্যা দেখা দেয়, তবে উর্ধ্বমুখী তেলের দাম যে চড়চড় করে আকাশ ছোঁবে, তা নিয়ে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই।

তবে ইরানের পরমাণু অস্ত্রের বিরোধিতায় ভারত যে আমেরিকার সঙ্গে একমত, মনমোহন তা স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছেন। ঘাড়ের কাছে আর একটি পরমাণু শক্তিধর দেশ যে ভারতের পক্ষে খুব একটা সুবিধার হবে না, তা নিয়ে ভারতীয় রাজনৈতিক ও কূটনৈতিক মহলে কোনও দ্বিমত নেই। প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাই যথেষ্ট কড়া ভাষায় বলেছেন, “পরমাণু অস্ত্র নিয়ে ইরানের পক্ষে একেবারেই কোনও অজুহাত দেখাতে চাইছে না ভারত। পরমাণু অস্ত্রপ্রসার রোধ চুক্তিতে সই করার পরে ইরানের উচিত ওই চুক্তির বিভিন্ন ধারাগুলিকে মেনে চলা।” এ ব্যাপারে আমেরিকা, ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন ও ভারতের মনোভাব এক। যা কিছু তফাত, তা কেবল পথের, সাফ জানিয়েছেন মনমোহন।

মার্কিন কংগ্রেস এ ব্যাপারে এখনও অনমনীয়। কিন্তু বুশ নিজে যুদ্ধের বদলে কূটনীতিকে একটা সুযোগ দিয়ে দেখতে চান। ইরানকে সোজা পথে আনতে এর মধ্যেই রাশিয়া, চীন ও ভারতের সহায় চায়েছেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট। ১৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ইরান নিয়ে ভিয়েনার সদর দফতরে আলোচনায় বসছেন আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি সংস্থার কর্তারা। আমেরিকা চাইছে, ওই বৈঠকে সর্বসম্মত ভাবে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে গোটা বিষয়টি রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে পাঠানো হোক। তাতে স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই ইরানের উপরে আন্তর্জাতিক নিষেধাজ্ঞা আরোপের সুবিধা হয়ে যাবে।

17 SEP 2005

# India-Iran ties cannot be held hostage to the U.S.: Karat

"UPA Government should act in India's interest"

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Prakash Karat on Friday said India-Iran relations cannot be held hostage to the United States.

He asked the United Progressive Alliance Government to act in India's interest and in its commitment to pursue an independent foreign policy.

"The UPA Government should not be stampeded into taking any stand against Iran which will undo the work done in recent years to establish close ties with Iran. Many of the things the Islamic regime is doing within the country cannot be condoned or accepted by the Left and democratic circles in India. But, developing state-to-state relations and coming to agreements for mutual benefit between the third world countries has to be pursued by the Government of India. It is important not to give in to the U.S. pressure on Iran," Mr. Karat said in the latest issue of the party organ, *People's Democracy*.

It comes in the backdrop of voices from Washington demanding that India along with China and Russia join the U.S.

against Iran on the nuclear issue in referring the case (against Iran) to the U.N. Security Council. Mr. Karat said that India, China and Russia should consult amongst themselves to take a common stand.

The UPA Government should also adhere to the stand that the nuclear issue be resolved through talks.

Mr. Karat said External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh's visit to Iran was criticised in the House International Relations Committee of U.S. Congress and said after Iraq, Iran and North Korea had become the targets of the Bush administration. "Some of the vituperative remarks directed against India's External Affairs Minister during the Congressional hearing has been rightly refuted by the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson," he said.

The United States is demanding that Iran stop its uranium enrichment programme. Having called Iran a "terrorist state" and a "destabilising force in international relations," the United States does not want Iran to develop its nuclear technology even for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Karat said Iran had the right, as a signatory to the Nu-

clear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes under international safeguards.

The United States was insisting that Iran's case be referred to the Security Council which could then lead to sanctions being imposed.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board had to take the decision to refer the matter to the U.N. The United States would like India to support its proposal in the IAEA for referring Iran's case to the Security Council, he said.

Pressure was being exercised on India by indicating that the U.S. agreement to supply nuclear fuel to India would be imperilled if India did not line up against Iran.

Mr. Karat said the UPA Government had said that India's bilateral relations with Iran were in its national interest. The gas pipeline project from Iran to India via Pakistan was decided keeping in mind India's energy needs.

The United States had expressed its displeasure at the project and hinted that countries which enter into such projects with Iran could be subject to sanctions.

17 SEP 1979

THE HINDU





# Iran's clearance for LNG project

Amit Baruah

TEHRAN: India on Saturday supported Iran's peaceful nuclear energy programme in keeping with Teheran's international obligations and commitments.

All sides should facilitate dialogue and resolve existing issues concerning Iran under the International Atomic Energy Agency framework, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said here. His comments came after

External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh met Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaqi and top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani on Saturday. Iran conveyed to Mr. Singh that all clearances relating to giving effect to the \$21 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) deal with India had been received. Also, the spokesman stated that Iran was giving positive consideration to India's desire to increase the

agreed amount of five million tonnes of LNG by another 2.5 million tonnes.

Mr. Ahmadinejad conveyed to Mr. Singh that projects such as the gas pipeline were useful in binding India, Pakistan and Iran together. Mr. Singh's 40-minute meeting with the Iranian President was described as warm and cordial. Petroleum Ministers from India, Iran and Pakistan are expected to meet before year-end to give shape to their

proposed trilateral gas pipeline project, Mr. Singh said after talks with his Iranian counterpart.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesman said the two Foreign Ministers reviewed the India-Iran, India-Pakistan and Pakistan-Iran meetings held so far.

Mr. Singh informed his Iranian counterpart that India had already appointed a financial consultant to go into the project.

04

Handwritten notes: "N/A" and "MOT" with arrows pointing to the text.

## এ বছরেই ভারত-ইরান গ্যাস পাইপের রূপরেখা

তেহরান, ৩ সেপ্টেম্বর: মার্কিন  
চাপের কাছে মাথা নোয়াল না ভারত।  
আজ ইরানের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে এক  
সাক্ষাৎের পরে ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রী  
নটবর সিংহ জানিয়েছেন, দু'দেশের  
মধ্যে গ্যাস পাইপলাইন প্রকল্পটি  
বাস্তবায়িত করতে ডিসেম্বর মাসেই  
প্রস্তাবের রূপরেখা তৈরি করে সই  
করবে ইরান ও ভারত। সাতশো কোটি  
ডলারের এই প্রকল্পে পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে  
দিয়ে পাইপলাইন নিয়ে গিয়ে ভারতকে  
গ্যাস সরবরাহ করবে ইরান।

তিন দিনের সফরে ইরানে এসেছেন  
নটবর। বিদেশমন্ত্রী মানুচেহর মোটাকির  
সঙ্গে আজ এক দীর্ঘ বৈঠকের পরে তিনি  
বলেন, “সব কিছু ঠিকঠাক চললে এ  
বছর ডিসেম্বরের মধ্যেই ভারত,  
পাকিস্তান ও ইরানের সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রীরা  
এক সঙ্গে বসে একটি চুক্তির রূপরেখা  
তৈরি করে ফেলবেন।” নভেম্বরের  
মধ্যেই এই রূপরেখার একটি প্রাথমিক  
খসড়া তৈরি হয়ে যাবে, আশা প্রকাশ  
করেন নটবর। এ ছাড়া ভারতকে বছরে  
৫০ লক্ষ মেট্রিক টন তরল প্রাকৃতিক  
গ্যাস সরবরাহ করতেও সম্মত হয়েছে  
ইরান। প্রস্তাবিত পাইপলাইনে গ্যাস  
পরিবহনের খরচ আন্তর্জাতিক মান  
অনুযায়ী নির্ধারণ করা হবে বলে সিদ্ধান্ত  
নিয়েছে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান। ৭ ও ৮  
সেপ্টেম্বর ইসলামাবাদে ওই

পাইপলাইন নিয়ে ভারত এবং  
পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে পেট্রোলিয়াম সচিব  
স্তরের দ্বিতীয় বৈঠক বসছে। ইরানের  
দক্ষিণ পারাস ক্ষেত্রে যে গ্যাসের সম্বন্ধ  
রয়েছে নিরপেক্ষ কোনও তৃতীয় পক্ষকে  
দিয়ে তার মূল্যায়ন করানো হবে বলেও  
রাজি হয়েছে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান।  
ইরানের বিদেশমন্ত্রীও জানিয়েছেন,  
দেশের নতুন সরকার পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প  
রূপায়ণে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। এই প্রতিশ্রুতি  
দিয়েছেন খোদ প্রেসিডেন্ট  
আহমদিনেজাদ। এ জন্য কয়েকটি  
কমিটিও গঠিত হয়েছে এবং তারা  
কাজটি এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাবে।

তবে তেহরানের পরমাণু প্রকল্প  
নিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক মহলে স্ফোভ  
বাড়ছে। আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি  
সংস্থা কালই জানিয়েছে, পরমাণু  
জ্বালানি নিয়ে ফের কাজ করেছে ইরান।  
ফলে ইরানের উপর নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি  
করতে পারে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ। রাজনৈতিক  
চাপে কি পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প থেকে সরে  
আসবে ভারত? ভারতীয়  
বিদেশমন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সারনা  
বলেন, “আশঙ্কা অমূলক। এই প্রকল্পকে  
এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে ভারতেরই  
স্বার্থে। আমাদের গ্যাস চাই।”

তাই জ্বালানি পেতে তেহরান ও  
ওয়াশিংটন, দু'পক্ষেরই মন রেখে চলার  
চেষ্টা করছে ভারত। — পি টি আই

# India and Iran: a time for reflection

Atul Aneja

AS THE curtain comes down on the Presidency of Mohammad Khatami, and a new generation of hardliners assumes key positions, India's relations with Iran are bound to face the ripple effects.

As never before, the shadow of the United States will loom large over the relationship between New Delhi and Teheran. The Americans oppose the new President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — the conservative former mayor of Teheran who won the June elections. Mr. Ahmadinejad belongs to a new generation of leaders who cut their teeth on the eight year Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. The new President is part of the Abadgaran group that already controls the Iranian parliament. Along with the hardliners, which are already positioned in the office of the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, Mr. Ahmadinejad's emergence marks the consolidation of the conservative ranks within the Iranian establishment.

Determined to keep Teheran as isolated as possible, the Americans even prior to Mr. Ahmadinejad's emergence had tried to persuade the Europeans and Iran's Arab neighbours to restrict economic and political links with Iran. The Europeans have largely disregarded American exhortations, and Iran's relationship with them has grown over the years. European companies have pumped in billions of dollars in Iran's oil and gas sector, disregarding the Iran-Libya sanctions act adopted by the United States, which bars investments of more than \$40 million into Iran's hydrocarbon sector. Defying U.S. pressure, Japan, Washington's trusted ally, has also decided to put \$2 billion into developing Iran's giant Azadegan oil field, which has estimated deposits of 26 billion barrels.

The Americans had, so far, largely ignored India's ties with Iran, which grew impressively during the late 1990s and are today poised for a quantum leap. The tipping point came when

With vital energy, trade, manufacturing, and security interests involved, Iran and India have an overwhelming stake in resisting U.S. pressure that seeks to inhibit their relationship.

both sides, along with Pakistan, began seriously to consider the construction of the 2,600-km Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. The U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for the first time publicly aired her concerns about the prospective deal during her visit to New Delhi in March 2005. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also spoke about the financial obstacles the construction of the pipeline might encounter, during his recent visit to the U.S.

Relations between Iran and India grew steadily in the 1990s, but acquired a new meaning when a hostile Taliban consolidated its hold in Afghanistan. By the time Taliban rule in Afghanistan was nearing its end, security officials from India, Iran, and Russia were holding regular consultations in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, which shares a border with Afghanistan. President Khatami's visit in January 2003 to India, where he was the chief guest at the Republic Day parade, symbolised the special ties New Delhi and Teheran were fast acquiring.

The Americans oppose the gas-pipeline deal on several counts. First, in their perception, it would help ease Iran's economic difficulties because of the handsome revenues it would generate. As it is, the Americans are concerned about the bonanza that oil-rich countries, including Iran, are reaping due to skyrocketing global oil prices. Secondly, the pipeline would set a dangerous precedent for other countries to follow. Iran is suitably placed as the natural transit corridor for the transport of Caspian Sea oil and

gas. The U.S. has, therefore, gone overboard to draw transit routes for Caspian oil that by-pass Iranian territory. The prime example of this approach has been the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline. In this case, the Americans made an extraordinary effort to route the pipeline towards the Turkish port of Ceyhan, so that Iranian territory was avoided. In this politically driven deal, the companies involved had to spend millions in extra costs to construct the pipeline through unfriendly terrain and conflict-prone zones.

Thirdly, and most important, the pipeline would help anchor friendly ties among Iran, Pakistan, and India. This would greatly undermine U.S. strategic leverage with India and Pakistan against Iran in the future.

## Business ventures

Aware of the benefits of looking east, the Iranians have welcomed India's participation in its oil and gas industry. Annual gas supplies of five million tonnes have been tied up for 25 years under an \$18 billion contract signed recently. Indian companies have been promised participation in Iranian gas fields. The Iranians have also opened up their petrochemical sector for Indian investment. Indian firms have already signed an agreement that would allow them to participate in the Yadavaran and Jufair oil fields, besides accessing the offshore Farsi block for exploration. Incidentally, India and China along with Iran will be partners in the Yadavaran ef-

fort — a move that might acquire greater political meaning if similar ventures are pursued in the future.

Iran and India have been deliberating over transit rights that would enable speedy transfer of Indian goods to Europe and Central Asia. Both sides have recently begun official level discussions on a land corridor that could allow Indian goods to transit through Pakistan, Iran, and Azerbaijan on to Europe. In case discussions reach a positive conclusion, containers can be sent from Punjab by road or rail to Pakistan. From there, they can be transhipped by rail into Iran, once it completes construction of the 540-km rail link between Zahedan on the Pakistan border and Kerman. Efforts are also under way to build a small portion of railway track to connect Iran with Azerbaijan. Some experts envisage that Indian goods would reach Europe in a record 13 days if this route were opened up.

Consequently, this land route is superior to the North-South corridor project under discussion earlier. Under this proposal, it was envisaged that goods would be first sent by sea to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. From there, they could be sent by rail to Bandar Anzali on the Caspian Sea. Another transshipment would then take them by barge to Astrakhan at the Russian end of the Caspian on to Europe. Some analysts say this route is cumbersome because of the multiple transshipment points involved. At best it would cut transit time by 10 days, when compared with another proven route via the Suez Canal.

India and Iran have also been discussing ways to transit Indian goods via the port of Chah Bahar. There is a proposal that India would construct a rail link from Chah Bahar to Bam. Once this is done, Indian goods can be sent from Chah Bahar to the Central Asian republics as well as Russia along an existing rail network, which connects Iran with the former Soviet Union.

Simultaneously, India and Iran are jointly working on extending the Iranian road network into Afghanistan. Indian construction activity is centred in Afghanistan between Zaranj and Delaram. The Iranians have been working on refurbishing a road system via Zahedan and Zabol, which is located at the Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan border junction. Once completed, the Iranian road network would be connected to the "garland road system" in Afghanistan and enable traffic to move towards the Central Asian republics and Russia.

Both countries have a joint stake in the development of Chah Bahar port. With Jebel Ali in Dubai fast becoming overcrowded, Chah Bahar is ideally located as a future-shipping hub for facilitating east-west trade. Once endowed with sufficient warehousing facilities, Chah Bahar can be used fully for promoting trade with landlocked Central Asia. Besides, Chah Bahar is also geo-strategically significant as it stands at the gates of the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, overlooking vital shipping lanes emerging from the Persian Gulf.

As ties between Iran and India deepen, both sides have been looking at new areas. Indian steel giant Tata Steel plans a joint venture with an Iranian company to make steel in the Persian Gulf Special Economic Zone (PGSEZ) in Bandar Abbas. Tata Steel and an Iranian company are also planning another three-million-tonne export-oriented unit at Bandar Abbas. The company will also participate in establishing a gas-based iron pellet plant at Gol-e-Gohar in Kerman province, using locally mined iron ore.

With vital energy, trade, manufacturing, and security interests involved, Iran and India have an overwhelming stake in resisting U.S. pressure that seeks to inhibit their relationship. For India, a combination of American pressure and inducements that seek to dissuade it from promoting its relations with Iran has become a test case. India's response would go a long way in shaping international opinion on whether or not it still has the gumption to pursue an independent foreign policy geared towards the defence of its genuine national interests.

## CARTOONSCAPE



# Iran urges India to play US threat down

India  
2005  
Aiyar

98-12  
8/8

AMITAV RANJAN

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 7

WHILE prodding New Delhi to get more pro-active on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, Tehran has listed out three reasons why India should not get intimidated by the threat of US sanctions.

On Wednesday, Deputy Petroleum Minister for International Affairs M.H. Nejad Hosseinian exhorted Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar to give 'more push' to the project and not get bogged down by the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA).

For one, Hosseinian said, the Americans had not taken any action against France and Malaysia for the investment

by their respective companies Total, Gazprom and Petronas in Iran's South Pars gas field. "This act has been dead from the very beginning," the minister was quoted as saying.

The second assurance that he gave Aiyar was that the ILSA may not cover the pipeline if the project was structured such that each country invested within its boundary.

"In case the Irani, Pakistani and Indian companies take care of the required investments in their own territories, ILSA does not apply," Hosseinian said.

Further, he argued that the US would not be able to put pressure on a large number of companies from different

countries if the project were to be implemented by a consortium of international firms.

The ILSA provides for US sanctions against a country that invests more than \$20 million in Iran's energy sector.

Hosseinian played India against Pakistan saying the latter was already on board and would participate in the proposed pipeline even if India decided to stay away.

"Earlier, the Pakistani side had indicated December 2005 as the deadline for taking a decision about their participation in the project. However, now they are ready to participate in the project any time," he said.

Hosseinian emphasised that the project was strategically very important for Iran.

08 AUG 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

# Talks on India-Iran pipeline to begin by year-end: Aiyar

Roadmap with milestones laid for project

Staff Reporter

**KOCHI:** Trilateral discussions among India, Iran and Pakistan on the proposed Indo-Iranian gas pipeline are expected to begin by the year-end, Union Minister for Petroleum and Panchayati Raj Mani Shankar Aiyar has said.

The process of collecting and sharing information to enable project structuring would be concluded by the end of November, said Mr. Aiyar, who also pointed out that there was no doubt over India's commitment to the project since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a statement to this effect in the Lok Sabha. Mr. Aiyar was speaking to reporters at a press conference here on Saturday at the end of a two-day first meeting of the Council of Panchayati Raj Ministers.

A roadmap with milestones has been laid for the gas pipeline project. Trilateral discussions would be a step forward from, and would build on, the ongoing bilateral discussions between India and Iran and India and Pakistan, he said. India was breaking new ground with Pakistan and India was building on the long-standing relationship with Iran. Mr. Aiyar said that he was waiting for the new Government to take charge in Iran before he

• **Collecting information for project structuring to finish by November-end**

• **No doubt over India's commitment to project**

• **India breaking new ground with Pakistan, building on long-standing relationship with Iran**

• **Keen to be part of pipeline-laying consortium**

• **BPCL-KRL swap ratio may be re-examined**

got in touch with the country's Petroleum Minister. The change of regime in Iran would not affect the gas pipeline project, he said.

The Minister said that India would be keen to be part of the consortium that laid the pipeline for the gas project since it would give India a bigger say in the project cost and also in being part of the security for the pipeline.

## LPG shortage

The Minister urged the State Government to locate those involved in the misuse of subsi-

dised cooking gas. He said that the current shortage was largely owing to the transport strike and the annual shutdown at Kochi Refineries Ltd. The need for Kerala would be met through sourcing gas from Mangalore Refineries Ltd. Diversion of LPG was rampant and it was up to the State Government to book the culprits, he added.

## KRL-BPCL merger

Mr. Aiyar said that the issue of KRL-BPCL merger would come up before the Cabinet. Certain quarters had raised objections to the share swap ratio.

The Minister did not say anything on raising the prices of petroleum products. He said that prices were constantly being monitored and that the price of crude had reached record levels last week.

He also did not say anything on the subsidy on LPG and kerosene.

The public sector oil companies had suffered loss during the current year with the Indian Oil Corporation suffering as much as Rs.500 crore loss in a month.

Mr. Aiyar said that the Union Petroleum Ministry had written to the State Governments to slash sales tax rates to decrease the burden of increasing prices on the people. It was up to the States to take a decision.

## কেন্দ্রের 'লুক-ওয়েস্ট' নীতি

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, ২৮ জুলাই— 'লুক-ইস্ট'-এর পর 'লুক-ওয়েস্ট'। পশ্চিম এশিয়ার দেশগুলির সঙ্গে বাণিজ্য সম্পর্ক উন্নত করতে 'লুক-ওয়েস্ট' নীতি ঘোষণা করেছে কেন্দ্র। সৌদি আরব, কুয়েত, কাতার, ওমান, বাহরিন এবং সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরশাহি-সহ উপসাগরীয় দেশগুলির সঙ্গে ভারতের বৈদেশিক ও বাণিজ্যিক সম্পর্ক বাড়ানোর ওপর জোর দিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী ড. মনমোহন সিং। প্রয়োজনীয় নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন কেন্দ্রীয় বাণিজ্য ও বিদেশ মন্ত্রককে। গতকাল 'ট্রেড অ্যান্ড ইকনমিক রিলেশনস কমিটি'-র বৈঠকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেন, 'গাল্ফ কো-অপারেশন কাউন্সিল' (জি সি সি)-এর সঙ্গে মুক্ত বাণিজ্য চুক্তি নিয়ে আলোচনার উদ্যোগ নিতে হবে। অর্থনৈতিক সহযোগিতার লক্ষ্যে উপসাগরীয় দেশগুলির সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ বাড়ানো জরুরি। বৈঠকে ছিলেন অর্থমন্ত্রী, বিদেশমন্ত্রী, বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী, জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা।

9 JUL 2001

AAJKAL

# Drop Iran pipeline project, US tells India

Washington Promises to Address New Delhi's Energy Needs, But Govt Remains Sceptical

By Chidanand Rajghatta  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Washington:** The US has said that it is willing to address India's long-term energy needs if New Delhi forgoes the proposed gas pipeline with Iran via Pakistan. A state department official told TOI on Tuesday that the broader question of India's energy needs was part of the on-going energy dialogue between New Delhi and Washington, and the US was hopeful of dissuading India from going ahead with the project. The official, who spoke on background, confirmed that secretary of state Condoleezza Rice had conveyed Washington's

"serious concern" about the proposed pipeline to India during her recent visit to New Delhi, but stopped short of saying the US would impose sanctions arising from provisions of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act.

"That's something that will have to be examined," he said, while describing the pipeline deal as a "small wrinkle" in Indo-US ties. The so-called ILSA requires the US President to impose sanctions on any international firm that does \$20 million or more in oil or gas business with Iran (and \$40 million with Libya). The Act was first signed by Bill Clinton in 1996 for five years, and later renewed by Pres-

ident Bush. The official, however, clarified that the sanctions provisions applied only to investments in Iran and not to any purchase of oil or gas. India just signed a \$22 billion multi-year deal to buy gas from Iran. The official was speaking ahead of a testimony before the Congress later on Tuesday by US assistant secretary of state for South Asia

Christina Rocca, in which she is expected to spell out Washington's stand in greater detail under questions from law-makers.

Indian officials remain sceptical of US promises to help address India's energy needs, given the welter of laws that stand in the way of civilian nuclear cooperation between the two countries. They say the US is also

aware that gas remains the cleanest and most accessible energy source for India as it faces a myriad difficulties in exploiting its coal and hydropower resources. In any case, they maintained, the US energy cooperation dialogue addresses India's long-term requirements, whereas India's needs were more urgent. "We live in a very complex neighbourhood, surrounded by governments and rulers of different orientation—communists, military dictatorships, monarchies. We hope the US understands the difficult choices we have to make for the well-being of our people," India's ambassador Ronen Sen said, alluding to

Washington's anathema for multilateral-dominated Iran.

While both India and Iran have expressed their determination to go ahead with the project even in the face of US threats, questions remain about Islamabad's commitment, which is vital to the project since the pipeline will have to pass through Pakistan.

Rice is said to have raised the issue with Pakistan foreign minister Kasuri during his visit to the US last week. While some media reports said Kasuri stood up to US pressure and spoke of Islamabad's resolve to go ahead with the project, Pakistan has a well-earned reputation for sell-outs and quick turnarounds.

# ইরান থেকে গ্যাস আমদানি, চুক্তি সই করল ভারত

তেহরান, ১৩ জুন: ইরান থেকে তরল প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস (এল এন জি) সরাসরি আমদানির জন্য ২,০০০ কোটি ডলারের চুক্তিতে সই করল ভারত। তবে বছরে ৫০ লক্ষ টনের বেশি গ্যাস ভারতকে দেওয়ার প্রস্তাব খারিজ করে দিয়েছে তেহরান। উল্লেখ্য, বাড়তি ২৫ লক্ষ টন এল এন জি ওই একই দরে দিতে জানুয়ারি মাসে সম্মত হয়েছিল তারা। তবে এই মুহুর্তে তাতে সায় মেলেনি, ইরান চড়া দাম চেয়েছে বলে ভারতীয় অফিসারদের সূত্র থেকে জানা গিয়েছে। আগামী ২০০৯-’১০ সালের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধ থেকে গুজরাতের দাহেজে এবং কেরলের কোচিতে ওই গ্যাস সরবরাহ করবে ইরান। এই লক্ষ্যই আজ চূড়ান্ত চুক্তি সম্পন্ন হয়েছে ভারতীয় তেল সংস্থাগুলির একটি কনসোর্টিয়াম এবং 'ন্যাশনাল ইরানিয়ান গ্যাস এক্সপোর্ট কোম্পানি'-র মধ্যে।

ভারতীয় তেল সংস্থাগুলিকে পারস্য উপসাগর অঞ্চলের উত্তর পারস্য গ্যাস ক্ষেত্রের একটি ব্লকে রফতানির জন্য এল এন জি উৎপাদন করতে দিতেও আজ রাজি হয়েছে ইরান। ইন্ডিয়ান অয়েল কর্পোরেশন এবং তার ইরানের সহযোগী পেট্রোপারসকে এই ব্লক দেওয়া হবে। ওই গ্যাস ক্ষেত্র থেকেই ভারত এবং অন্যান্য দেশে এল এন জি রফতানি করা হবে। ইরানের তেলমন্ত্রী বিজন জাংগানে দু'দিনের মন্ত্রী পর্যায়ের আলোচনা শেষে আজ এই সিদ্ধান্তের কথা জানিয়েছেন।

অন্য দিকে ও এন জি সি-র শাখা সংস্থা ও এন জি সি বিদেশকেও অন্য একটি ব্লক দেওয়া হতে পারে বলে আজ

ইঙ্গিত মিলেছে। সেখানে গ্যাস উৎপাদন এবং তা তরলে রপান্তর করবে সংস্থা।

যে ৫০ লক্ষ টন এল এন জি আমদানি করা হবে (দৈনিক ১ কোটি ৮০ লক্ষ ঘন মিটার), তার জন্য ইরান দাম ধার্য করবে অশোধিত তেল ব্রেন্টের তৎকালীন দামের ০.০৬৫ ভাগ। এর সঙ্গে যুক্ত হবে প্রতি ১০ লক্ষ ব্রিটিশ থার্মাল ইউনিট (এম বি টি ইউ) প্রতি ১.২ ডলার, যা অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে। তবে দ্বিতীয় বছর পর্যন্ত জোগান দেওয়ার পরে তা ২ শতাংশ করে বাড়তে হবে। এই সূত্র অনুসারে ভারতকে যে দাম দিতে হবে, তার উর্ধ্বসীমা হবে প্রতি এম বি টি ইউ-র জন্য ৩.২১৫ ডলার। এর সঙ্গে অবশ্য যোগ হবে পরিবহণের খরচ, যার ফলে ভারতকে ওই এল এন জি-র জন্য দিতে হবে এম বি টি ইউ প্রতি ৩.৫০ ডলার। অন্য দিকে অতিরিক্ত ২৫ লক্ষ টন গ্যাস নিলে উর্ধ্বসীমাই ধরা হবে কমপক্ষে ৩.৫০ ডলারে। তার উপর দিতে হবে পরিবহণের খরচ। সেই কারণেই চুক্তিতে ওই বাড়তি আমদানির প্রস্তাব রাখা হয়নি বলে সরকারি সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে।

এ দিকে, আমদানি করা গ্যাসের ৪০ শতাংশ বিপণন করবে রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব গেল। ইন্ডিয়ান অয়েল এবং ভারত পেট্রোলিয়ামের হাতে থাকবে যথাক্রমে ৩৫ শতাংশ এবং ২৫ শতাংশ বিপণনের অধিকার।

তেল আমদানির বিষয়টির উপর নজরদারির জন্য গড়া হবে একটি যৌথ কমিটি। সময়মতো গ্যাস লেনদেন হচ্ছে কিনা, তার উপর নজর রাখবে এই কমিটি। — পি টি আই

4 JUN 2005 ANADABAZAR PATRIKA



# India, Iran to sign \$25-bn LNG deal

*India - Iran*  
**Teheran:** India is likely to sign on Monday a 25-billion US dollar deal with Iran for the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) beginning 2009-10 to meet its growing energy requirements.

The Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA) for at least 5 million tonnes per annum of LNG beginning second half of 2009-10 will be signed by a consortium of Indian firms and National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC), officials said.

Of the 5 million tonnes per annum LNG to be imported from Iran, state-run gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd will be responsible for marketing 40 per cent, Indian Oil Corp (IOC) 35 per cent and Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) the remaining 25 per cent.

"We have been insisting on the LNG quantity be raised to 7.5 million tonnes. We have to wait for the outcome of my talks with Iranian oil minister Bijan Zanganeh," petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said.

Iran has refused to give concession on price for an additional 2.5 million tonnes of LNG. New Delhi wants to buy over and above the 5 million tonnes per annum of LNG already agreed. On the contrary, Iranian side has proposed a hike in price. However, Iran has agreed to maintain C2 (ethane) component in the LNG at 5 per cent.



**Mani Shankar**

*13/6*  
Aiyar said a GSPA for at least 5 million tonnes per annum of LNG would be signed on June 13 and if Iran agrees the quantities can be raised to 7.5 million tonnes or else discussions would continue for additional supplies. As per the pricing formula agreed, India will pay Iran 0.065 of Brent crude oil price at the time of loading of each consignment plus a fixed price of 1.2 dollars per million British thermal unit (mBtu). The price, according to this formula, would be capped at 3.10 dollars per mBtu at 31 dollars a barrel

Brent price, officials said.

To this 0.30 dollars per mBtu would be added for transporting the gas in its liquefied form in specialised tankers from Phase 12 of the gigantic South Pars gas field and the delivered price of LNG in India would be 3.40 dollars per mBtu. The fixed price component (1.2 dollars per mBtu) would have an escalation of 2 per cent per year after the second year of the contract delivery.

Officials said Iranian gas was costlier than the LNG India was importing from Qatar. Qatar LNG has been priced in a band of 16 to 24 dollars a barrel of Japanese Crude Cocktail (JCC). Qatar is selling LNG for the first five years at a fixed price of 2.53 dollars per mBtu at 20 dollars a barrel oil price. PTI

13 JUN 2009

India - west Asia

# ইরান থেকে গ্যাস, আজ চুক্তির ইঙ্গিত

তেহরান, ১২ জুন: ইরান থেকে ভারতে তরল প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস (এল এন জি) আমদানি সংক্রান্ত চুক্তিটি আগামী কালই সই হচ্ছে বলে ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন পেট্রোলিয়ামমন্ত্রী মণিশঙ্কর আইয়ার। ২৫০০ কোটি ডলারের এই লেনদেনে ২০০৯-১০ সালের দ্বিতীয়ার্ধ থেকেই ভারতে এল এন জি আসার কথা বলে সংশ্লিষ্ট অফিসারদের সূত্র জানা গিয়েছে।

তবে চুক্তি সই হলেও প্রকল্পের ভবিষ্যৎ এই মুহূর্তে অনেকটাই নিভর করছে আমেরিকার উপর। কারণ, আমেরিকা ইতিমধ্যেই হুঁশিয়ারি দিয়েছে যে, ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইনে গ্যাস নিয়ে যেতে দিলে তারা পাকিস্তানের বিরুদ্ধে আর্থিক নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করতে পারে। আমেরিকাকে চটানোর ঝুঁকি পাকিস্তান কতটা নিতে পারবে, সে ব্যাপারে বিশেষজ্ঞরা আশঙ্কাও জানিয়েছেন।

তবে বিশেষজ্ঞদের একাংশ এই ইঙ্গিতও দিয়েছেন, ইরানের সঙ্গে পরমাণু প্রকল্প ইত্যাদি

নিয়ে আমেরিকার দৃষ্টি চলতি বছরের ডিসেম্বরের মধ্যে মিটে যেতে পারে। কারণ, আমেরিকা-ইরান বোঝাপড়ার চেষ্টা ইতিমধ্যেই শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছে। সে ক্ষেত্রে অবশ্য পাইপলাইন প্রকল্পে অংশ নিতে পাকিস্তানের আর অসুবিধা থাকবে না।

বছরে কমপক্ষে ৫০ লক্ষ টন গ্যাস লেনদেনের এই চুক্তিতে শাশনাল ইরানিয়ান গ্যাস এক্সপোর্ট কোম্পানি-র সঙ্গে সই করবে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত গ্যাস ও তেল সংস্থাগুলির কনসোর্টিয়াম। পেট্রোলিয়ামমন্ত্রী মণিশঙ্কর আইয়ার বলেন, “আমরা গ্যাস আমদানির পরিমাণ প্রস্তাবিত ৫০ লক্ষ টন থেকে বাড়িয়ে ৭৫ লক্ষ টন করার আর্জি জানিয়েছি। তবে ইরানের তেলমন্ত্রী বিজন জাংগানে-র সঙ্গে আমার আলোচনার ফল কী হয়, তার উপরই এটা নির্ভর করছে।” ইরানের সরকারি সূত্রে ইঙ্গিত মিলেছে, তার এল এন জি-তে ইথেনের অনুপাত ৫ শতাংশেই থাকবে।

বাড়তি গ্যাস বিক্রিতে ইরান রাজি থাকলে তা

আগামী কালের চুক্তির অন্তর্গত হতে পারে বলে আইয়ার মনে করছেন। তবে ইরান বিষয়টি নিয়ে আরও আলোচনা চাইলে চুক্তি পিছিয়ে যেতে পারে বলেও ইঙ্গিত দেন ভারতের পেট্রোলিয়ামমন্ত্রী উল্লেখ্য, দু’দেশের মধ্যে তিন দিনের মন্ত্রী পর্যায়ের বৈঠক শেষ হচ্ছে আগামী কাল।

প্রস্তাবিত ৫০ লক্ষ টন গ্যাসের মধ্যে গেইল বিপণন করবে ৪০ শতাংশ, ইন্ডিয়ান অয়েল ৩৫ শতাংশ এবং ভারত পেট্রোলিয়াম বাকি ২৫ শতাংশ।

তবে ওই বাড়তি ২৫ লক্ষ টন গ্যাস ভারতকে দিলেও তার জন্য দাম কমাতে নারাজ ইরান। বরং তারা বর্ধিত দাম নেওয়ার প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে। ইরানের প্রস্তাব অনুযায়ী এই গ্যাসের দাম হবে প্রতি ১০ লক্ষ ব্রিটিশ থার্মাল ইউনিটের জন্য সর্বোচ্চ ৩.১০ ডলার। এ ক্ষেত্রে অশোধিত তেল ব্রেস্টের দাম ধরা হয়েছে ব্যারেল প্রতি ৩১ ডলার। এর সঙ্গে

যোগ হবে পরিবহনের খরচ বারদ প্রতি ১০ লক্ষ ব্রিটিশ থার্মাল ইউনিটের জন্য ০.৩০ ডলার। প্রসঙ্গত, কাতার থেকে ভারত যে এল এন জি কিনে থাকে, তার থেকে ইরানের গ্যাসের দাম বেশি পড়বে বলে অফিসারদের সূত্র থেকে জানা গিয়েছে।

প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাসকে তরলে পরিণত করার জন্য ইরানে যে কারখানা তৈরির কথা, তার কিছুটা মালিকানাও হাতে রাখতে পারবে ভারতীয় সংস্থাগুলি। প্রতি ১০ লক্ষ টন এল এন জি কেনার জন্য তেল সংস্থাগুলি ৪ শতাংশ পর্যন্ত শেয়ারের অংশীদারি হাতে রাখতে পারবে।

পাইপলাইন চিন পর্যন্ত নিয়ে যেতে প্রস্তাব আইয়ার বলেছেন, ২৬০০ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ ইরান-ভারত পাইপলাইনটিকে চিনে নিয়ে যাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা খতিয়ে দেখতে রাজি হয়েছে ইরান। এ ব্যাপারে চিনের সঙ্গে আলোচনা শুরু করার জন্যও ইরান সবুজ সঙ্কেত দিয়েছে।

— পি টি আই

ANADABAR... FOR...

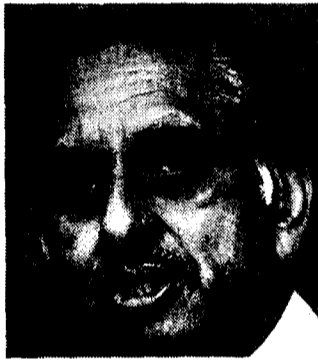
# India plans to use Israeli pipeline for crude imports, says Aiyar

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"Immense possibility of us becoming consumers of Caspian oil"

**BAKU:** India on Friday proposed to diversify its sources of crude supplies by using an Israeli pipeline to access crude oil from the Central Asia and Caspian Sea region to feed its fuel needs.

Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, addressing the 12th International Caspian Oil and Gas Conference here, said the 254-km-long Eilat-Ashqelon pipeline could be used for transporting east Mediterranean crude to the Red Sea, from where it can be shipped to India.

Oil, according to Mr. Aiyar, could be pumped from the Caspian region into the just-commissioned 1,764-km Baku (Azerbaijan-Tblisi (Georgia)-Ceyhan (Turkey)) pipeline to reach the Mediterranean Sea, from



*Petroleum Minister  
Mani Shankar Aiyar*

where it could be pumped into the Israeli pipeline for Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) to pick up at the Red Sea for

transporting it to India.

"There is immense possibility of us becoming consumers of Caspian oil. We are ready to pick up whatever Caspian oil is available in the Mediterranean Sea at competitive rates," Mr. Aiyar said.

The Eilat-Ashqelon pipeline has been engaged in transporting oil from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean for 30 years.

It will change its direction for the second time in November to enable a VLCT (Very Large Crude Oil Tanker) to ship Ashqelon oil from Eilat at the shore of the Red Sea to Asia.

Russia had also proposed to use the Israeli pipeline for export of oil to Asia. Russia had long been considering increas-

ing its oil sale to Asia, whose demand for oil has surpassed that of Europe.

India, among the big Asian importers, is intentionally reducing its dependence on oil from West Asia.

The Israeli pipeline provides an alternative for oil companies and saves their oil tankers — which are too big to pass through the Suez Canal — from going all the way around Africa to supply crude to Asian buyers.

Mr. Aiyar said there had been no connection between the Caspian region and South Asia in the energy sector and the proposed restoration of the ancient silk route by opening a link for flow of oil and gas from the region to Asia. — PTI

10 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

# India's ties with Israel will not affect our relations, says Mahmoud Abbas

India announces Rs. 65 crores for developmental projects in Palestine

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The president of Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, on Friday appreciated India's continuing support to developmental projects and said its ties with Israel would not affect the "very close and very strong" India-Palestine relationship.

Speaking to newsmen at the end of his two-day visit to India, Mr. Abbas said India's move to develop closer security and economic ties with Israel was "a matter of sovereignty. They can contact Israel in their interests."

However, India's position on the Palestine dispute continued to remain the same from the beginning. "India is for a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Israel," he said. He was asked about his talks with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the United Progressive Alliance chairperson, Sonia Gandhi.

The Ministry for External Affairs (MEA), in a separate briefing, said that India continued to support the Palestinian cause and "would do whatever could be done to help the Palestinian people and the state." To this end, India an-

nounced Rs. 65 crores for development projects, mainly for infrastructure development and the social sector. India had also gifted a plot of land for the Palestinian Embassy, said the MEA Secretary (East), Rajiv Sikri. India wanted an end to the violence in the occupied territories, as it was counter-productive to peace in the region.

On the recent outbreak of violence in the Gaza strip, Mr. Abbas hoped that all parties would adhere to the truce accord. "I hope that we can contain and control all incidents of violence. Truce is in the interest of all parties."

Mr. Abbas maintained that the polls to the Palestine National Assembly would be held as scheduled on July 17. "There is no intention to postpone the polls." Asked about his coming visit to the U.S. next month, he said he would discuss the issue of complete Israeli pullout from the Gaza strip and other areas.

On Israel's decision to release 400 Palestinian prisoners, he said that though this had been announced, it was not known when they would be freed. At the same time, "we can't forget that 11,000 prisoners are still in jail," Mr. Abbas said.

21 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

# PM offers hand of friendship to Iraq

**PRANAY SHARMA**

**New Delhi, May 7:** India today made the first move to re-establish contacts with Iraq and offered assistance for reconstruction of the war-torn country and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

This is the first time that New Delhi has made an offer directly to the Iraqi regime in Baghdad on playing a role in the country.

The offer was made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in his congratulatory letter to his Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim al Jaafari on the formation of a new transitional government.

India, which had refused to send troops to Iraq to participate in the American effort to stabilise the country after the Bush administration got rid of the Saddam Hussein regime, had expressed its willingness to work for the reconstruction of the country. But so far, it has been in private conversation.

But it is not clear whether India will take the risk of sending its personnel to help in the reconstruction of Iraq till it is absolutely confident of an improvement in the security situation in the country.

Last year, the abduction of three Indian truck drivers by a militant Iraqi group had given the UPA coalition many sleepless nights. The three drivers were released following diplomatic endeavours by India.

"The new government has

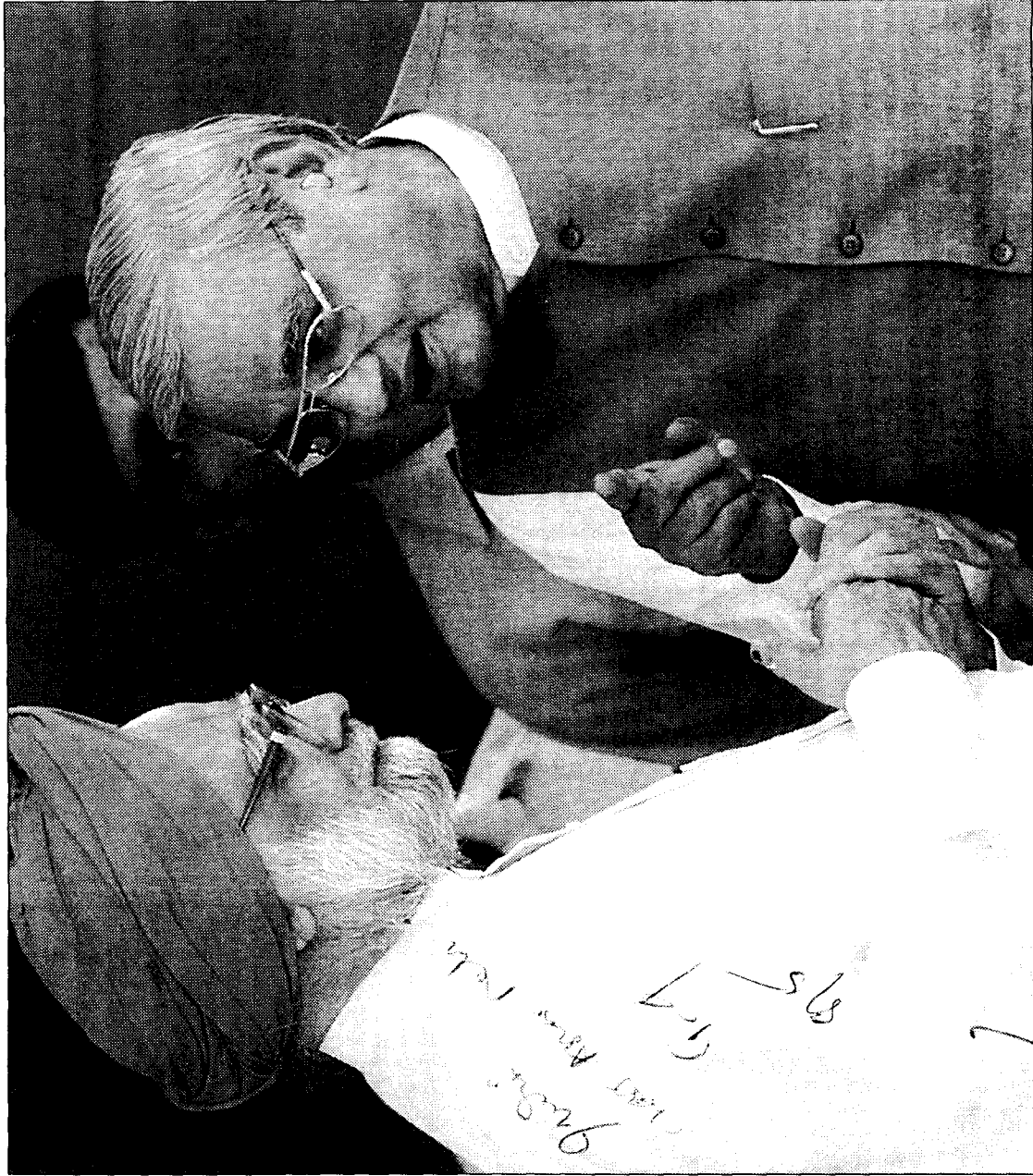
just been put in place and, therefore, the question of making the offer to Iraq directly does not arise," a foreign ministry official said when asked to comment on Delhi's willingness to work for the reconstruction of the country.

In his message, the Prime Minister said India would like to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries and their people. Singh wished the Iraqi people success in their efforts towards building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Iraq.

"In keeping with India's long tradition of close political, economic and cultural ties with Iraq, (the) Prime Minister conveyed that India values and would like to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between (the) two countries and peoples, and would be happy to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq and cooperation in areas of mutual interest," a statement issued by the foreign ministry said.

During the visit of US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage to India last year, New Delhi had expressed its willingness to play a significant role in the reconstruction of Iraq by training Iraqi policemen, teachers, nurses, IT personnel, diplomats and administrative staff.

Though this has been the Indian position for several months now, it was not willing to get involved in Iraq till the return of political stability in the strife-torn country.



**WHAT'S COOKING?** Atal Bihari Vajpayee with Manmohan Singh at the inauguration of a memorial to Lal Bahadur Shastri in New Delhi on Saturday. They shook hands before and after the function and were seen talking. (AFP)

## V-Day Moscow date

**New Delhi, May 7:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will leave on a three-day trip to Moscow tomorrow to participate in the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the Victory Day, reports our special correspondent.

Leaders of 56 countries will attend the celebrations on May 9, marking the day when Nazi Germany fell to the Soviet Union. The event became the turning point of World War II and led to the victory of the Allied forces.

US President George W. Bush will be among the foreign dignitaries, but it is not clear whether he will have a substantial meeting with Singh.

The Prime Minister will, however, have a meeting with his host and Russian President Vladimir Putin on bilateral and other issues of mutual interest.

Singh may also have a few meetings with leaders of Central Asian countries.

But the timings are still being worked out by Indian officials since most of the leaders' stay in Moscow will be very short.

The Prime Minister will return to the capital on May 10.



# Aiyar wants Iran to price gas reasonably

By Our Special Correspondent

*Handwritten: Mani Shankar Aiyar*

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 16.** The Petroleum Minister, Mani Shankar Aiyar, today said that if Iran did not offer natural gas supplies at a reasonable price, India may be forced to look elsewhere to meet its energy needs. At the same time, he stressed the need to make the pipeline through Pakistan a reality to enhance the country's energy security.

Speaking at a book launch of the Observer Research Foundation, he said to realise this dream project, the countries concerned had to deal with various issues and understand each other's concerns.

Mr. Aiyar underlined the need for Iran to fix a reasonable price for petroleum products for India and Pakistan so that it was affordable. "Otherwise we would be forced to look at other options." In this context, he noted that if Iran had alternative markets in the United States, China and Japan, then these could be tapped by it. In-

dia and Pakistan, however, together offered one of the most attractive markets for energy in the world, with a demand of nearly 200 million standard cubic metres a day. He felt that Iran should offer a special price to such large consumers.

Referring to the project, he said that there was a rocky road ahead. "The way is not going to be smooth. But once the dream is realised, it is going to benefit all countries in the region. For this, political perceptions in all the concerned countries will have to be dealt with first." On a possible hike in petrol and diesel prices due to the spiralling world oil prices, he said the proposals would be finalised for Cabinet approval by his Ministry today. These would then be circulated and later considered by the Cabinet, he said and indicated that the final clearance would be possible only by the end of the month. On the new comprehensive pricing strategy, he said it could be unveiled once international oil prices stabilised.

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# Pay for Iran gas on arrival

Iran - Nat Singh

## Rest taken care of: Kharrazi

Nilova Roy Chaudhury  
New Delhi, February 22

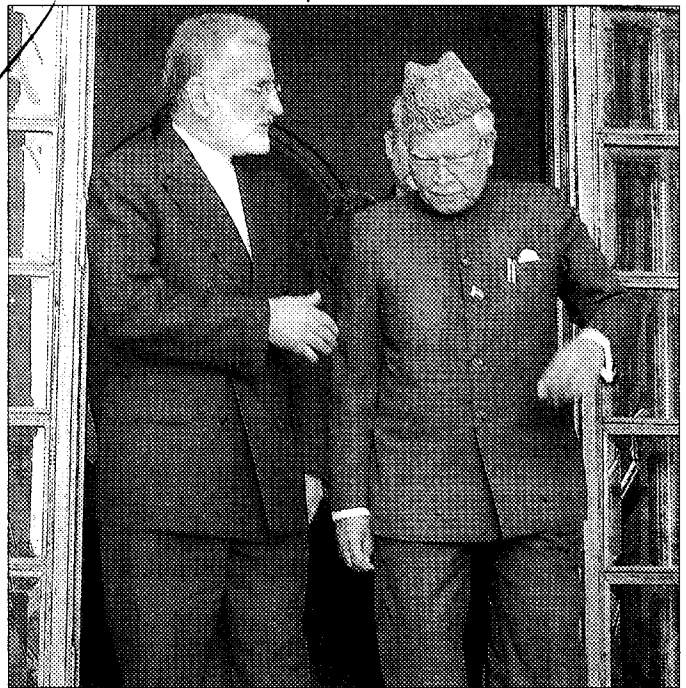
INDIA WOULD only need to pay for the gas once it arrives at its borders from Iran, Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi said in an exclusive interview to HT. It's on a "take-and-pay" basis, he added.

According to the minister, an international consortium — the components of which are to be determined — will handle all other details like building the gas pipeline from Iran to India, through Pakistan, and will also provide the required security guarantees in consultation with the governments concerned.

On the subject of a transit corridor through Pakistan to allow India road access to Iran and further on to Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, he said India would have to talk "directly" to Pakistan as Iran would not be involved. Speaking of the possibility of a West Asian Economic Bloc comprising Iran, Pakistan, India and Central Asian states, Kharrazi said enhanced regional connectivity (land and rail) and energy security were key in providing stability to such a bloc.

Hailing the election of a democratic government in Iraq as "a positive step for the region", Kharrazi said: "We welcome it. A representative government with public support would have control and be able to provide security". He added: "We believe it is imperative to use the opportunity created by the removal of a great menace to our region's security; to replace mistrust and arms race with confidence-building and transparency". On the subject of Iran's nuclear weapons programme, Kharrazi said the country was "working on two tracks" to dispel doubts about its programme.

Track 1 was with the IAEA, with whom Iran was "working closely to clarify all outstanding issues". Signing the Additional Protocol was a sign of Iran's transparency, he said. Track 2 was with three EU countries — France, Germany and Great Britain. "We wouldn't produce nuclear weapons but we want the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Our programme was exclusively energy-oriented", he said.



FRUITFUL: Natwar Singh and Kamal Kharrazi in New Delhi on Tuesday.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 FEB 2005





## India willing to mediate in Israel-Palestine peace process

By Our Staff Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 3.** India is willing to mediate in bringing about peace between Israel and Palestine to settle the West Asian crisis if the proposal was acceptable to both the parties, and others concerned with the dispute, C.R. Gharekhan, India's Special Envoy to West Asia, told reporters here today.

Having returned from a visit of the region, Mr. Gharekhan said that India was willing to play the role of a mediator if it was asked to, though it would still maintain its stand on settling disputes bilaterally. Since India had good relations with Israel as well as Palestine, it can talk to both parties candidly without compromising on its own position, he added. Mr. Gharekhan will also establish contact with the United States and Russia in the peace process.

During his visit, Mr. Gharekhan met the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, at Cairo, Presi-

dent Mahmud Abbas of Palestine and senior Jordanian leaders. "The Arab leaders warmly welcomed the Indian Government's renewed interest in the region and its decision to appoint an envoy." Instability in the region is of concern to us because our energy sources come from there, and it can have an impact on us, Mr. Gharekhan said.

### Coordinated approach

Suggesting that initiation of the peace process between Israel and Palestine was a glimmer of hope for the region, he hoped that we would possibly see the peace process being completed by the end of July. "I have all the powers and the mandate required for my job and I will make a coordinated approach towards this region to make the people conscious of the opportunities in India."

On Iraq, the Special Envoy said that India was willing to help in reconstruction of the country.

THE HINDU

04 MAR 2005

## ভারত-ইরান পাইপলাইন নিয়ে বৈঠক শীঘ্রই

রাঙ্গালোর, ৩ মার্চ: পাকিস্তানের মধ্য দিয়ে ভারত-ইরান গ্যাস পাইপলাইন আনার ব্যাপারে আগামী সপ্তাহে ইসলামাবাদে একটি ত্রিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকে বসবেন তিন দেশের প্রতিনিধিরা।

দু'দিনের ভারত সফরে এসে আজ এ কথা জানিয়েছেন ইরানীয় সংসদের মুখপাত্র গোলাম আলি হান্দাদ আদেল।

এ দিকে, পেট্রোলিয়াম মন্ত্রী মণি শঙ্কর আইয়ার জানান, ইরানকে প্রয়োজনীয় নিরাপত্তার দিকে নজর রেখে তবেই ভারতে প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস সরবরাহ করতে হবে। বিশেষত গ্যাস পাইপলাইনের যে-অংশ পাকিস্তানের উপর দিয়ে যাবে, সেই অংশের জন্য বিমা-সহ যাবতীয় নিরাপত্তার ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে ইরান সরকারকে।

প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য, ২৭৫৫ কিলোমিটার-ব্যাপী এই পাইপলাইনের এক চতুর্থাংশ পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে দিয়ে যাবে।

২০০৯ সালের মধ্যে এই প্রকল্পটি বাস্তবায়িত হলে ভারতের বিপুল গ্যাসের চাহিদা মিটবে বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে। —পি টি আই

04 MAR 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

# Iran offers India Inc multiple visas

THE TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi on Monday offered three year multiple visas and long-term stay permits to Indian businessmen and investors to boost economic ties between the two countries. He also stressed that the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline would bolster regional cooperation.

Kharrazi said Indian government's approval of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline had created an encouraging atmosphere for going ahead with the project. "Laying the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline would be the best and most desirable step towards enhancing cooperation between Iran and India," said Kharrazi at the Joint Business Council meeting hosted by Ficci. He said the LNG and oil deals between the two countries provided a solid base for In-

dia's energy security and economic growth.

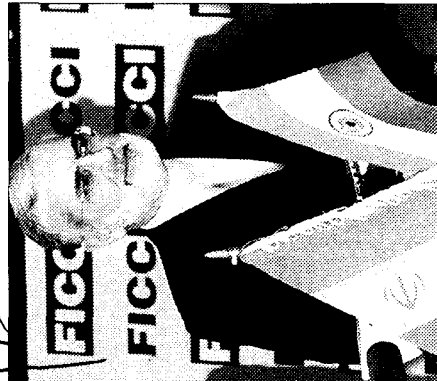
Kharrazi called for investments in Iran's IT, engineering, biotechnology and tourism sectors. The availability of low-cost energy in Iran could encourage joint ventures for produc-

ing of cement, steel and aluminium, he added. Kharrazi dismissed concerns over repeated outbursts by US against Iran, saying "despite sanctions, the flow of foreign investments into Iran and business collaborations have remained unaffected in small, medium and mega industrial projects."

The foreign minister described the

signing of strategic agreements earlier this year regarding Iran selling 7.5 million tons of LNG a year to India for 25 years and India's participation in developing Iranian oil fields and extracting 100,000 barrels of oil per day, as "significant

outcome". The minister also said the initiative taken by Iran, Russia and India to create a north-south transport cor-



**Kamal Kharrazi**

ridor and an east corridor, extending up to Uzbekistan, would considerably reduce costs and time of movement of merchandise between the two countries and open new horizons for regional cooperation.

He said time is now ripe for the formation of an economic bloc in the South Asia axis for regional convergence and establishing links amongst similar blocs in Southeast Asia, the Persian Gulf and Europe.

The Iranian ambassador to India, Zargar Yaghoubi said investment between Iran and India, worth \$5 billion, were being negotiated in diverse fields such as steel, mining, transportation, engineering & technical services and IT.

India's ambassador to Iran, KC Singh, pointed out that top Indian business houses such as Tatas, Essar, RPG were seriously looking at establishing steel plants in Iran.

# Iran move to attract Indian investors

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Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 21. — Iran is wooing Indian investors in the country by offering three-year multiple entry visa and long-term stay permits for them, the visiting Iranian foreign affairs minister, Dr Kamal Kharrazi, today said.

“Greater partnership between Iran and Iraq will also open up regional cooperation,” Mr Kharrazi said at a joint business council meeting organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci).

In a bid to encourage projects in the country, Iran has set up a reserve fund out of the extra money from oil. “Half of this fund, amounting to \$4.7 billion, will be allocated to the private sector. This is an opportunity for joint ventures in Iran,” the Iranian foreign minister said.

The three-year multiple visa facility and long term stay permit would encourage in-

## Deal hailed

NEW DELHI, Feb. 21.— Iran has welcomed India's decision on going ahead with the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline by the Cabinet last week. The two countries also decided to sign two agreements on protection of bilateral investment and avoidance of double taxation to shore up the burgeoning trade relations. As part of the 14th meeting of the India-Iran joint commission, the Iranian foreign minister, Mr Kamal Kharrazi, today met with the external affairs minister, Mr Natwar Singh. — SNS

vestments in Iran's IT, engineering, biotechnology and tourism industries, he said.

Trade exchange had seen “a sharp increase” between the two countries in the last few years, Mr Kharrazi said. Bilateral trade during 2004 had crossed the \$3-billion mark, registering a 30 per cent rise compared to 2003, he said.

THE STATESMAN

22 FEB 2005

# Iran welcomes India's decision on pipeline project

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

22/2  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 21. The Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, said today that building the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline would be the "best and most desirable step" between Teheran and New Delhi in the field of energy cooperation.

Mr. Kharrazi, who held talks with the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, and called on the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said piped gas, a cheaper option, would attract foreign investment to countries in the re-

FD-11  
gion. He claimed that India's decision to go ahead with the gas pipeline project had created an "encouraging atmosphere" for pushing ahead with this "highly important" project. Pakistan had no problem in going ahead with the project.

Mr. Kharrazi held detailed discussions with Mr. Singh during the 14th meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesman told presspersons that Mr. Singh and Mr. Kharrazi reviewed the current state of India-Iran relations with a focus on economic and cultural coop-

India, Iraq, Iran  
eration. Mr. Kharrazi was satisfied that elections had been held in Iraq and that a new government would be taking power in Baghdad. Iran would work in Iraq on training, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Mr. Kharrazi also briefed Mr. Singh on Teheran's discussions with the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran had the right to use nuclear technology for civilian purposes.

The spokesman said that trade between the two countries stood at over \$3 billion — there had also been an increase

in trade in the non-oil sector. Cement and aluminium were two areas that had shown considerable growth.

India was keen on the two countries providing a more secure environment for investment by concluding a bilateral investment protection agreement and a double taxation avoidance agreement.

Later at a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) function, Mr. Kharrazi said that Indo-Iranian trade had shown a growth of 30 per cent in 2004 when compared to the previous year.

THE HINDU

22 FEB 2005

# Iran-India pipeline hits rough patch

S. P. S. PANNU

**New Delhi, Feb 20:** There seems to be a hex on the proposed Iran-India gas pipeline via Pakistan that has been mired in sands of political brinkmanship in the South Asian region for decades.

Just when everything seemed hunky-dory and talks were about to begin with the officials in these countries, questions are being raised about the economics of the entire project now that Pakistan is insisting on an annual transit fee of \$600 million.

The pipeline is already fraught with security risk and will always remain hostage to the ups and downs of India's relationship with Pakistan. But the huge transit fee that Pakistan is insisting on would render it entirely unviable, say experts.

A senior Petronet LNG official told **The Telegraph** that if Pakistan insists on a \$600-million transit fee for the pipeline, it would be cheaper

to import the natural gas from Iran in liquefied form. This would skirt the security risk that hovers over the pipeline option.

Experts reckon that transporting gas through a pipeline works out to be cheaper than liquefied natural gas (LNG) if the distance is less than 3,500 kms. Over longer distances, LNG can compete with the pipeline option.

The proposed India-Iran pipeline is expected to cover around 3,000 km, which would give it an edge over LNG. However, the exorbitant fee that Pakistan hopes to rake in, negates the cost advantage vis-à-vis the LNG option, the official said.

Gail chairman Proshanto Banerjee feels that importing gas in the form of compressed natural gas is also potentially a good option. In fact, he has included it as one of the options of transporting natural gas from Myanmar to the east coast, where considerable headway has been made in

construction, maintenance or operation of the pipeline, which will pass through 760 kms of Pakistani territory.

Petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar has clearly stated that India will not enter into any agreement with Pakistan and deal only with Iran on the issue. It would be Tehran's responsibility to strike a deal with Pakistan for laying the pipeline and deliver the gas safely to the Indian border, the minister said.

Iran, on the other hand, wants to stop short and deliver the gas at its own border. This will enable it to avoid investing in the Pakistani stretch and facing the security risk that the pipeline operations will run into in Pakistan.

Petroleum secretary S. C. Tripathi has stated that India will also seek comfort from Iran in the form of commitment to supply liquefied natural gas in case supplies are disrupted.

He has also disclosed plans of building strategic storage

facilities in Rajasthan or Gujarat as an insurance against disruption in supplies.

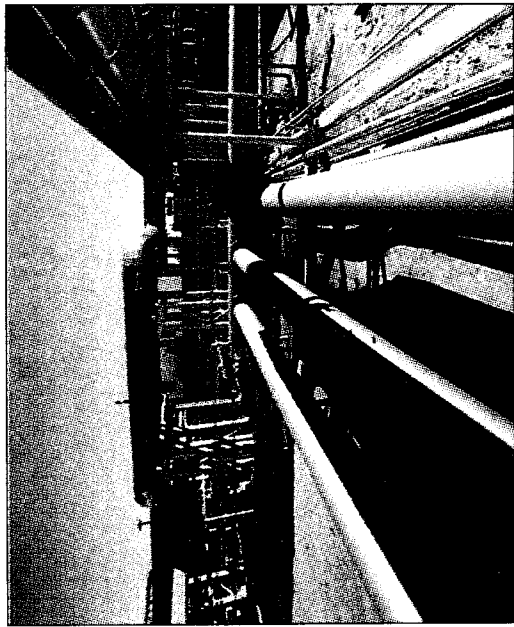
However, the question still remains whether it is prudent for India to invest thousands of crores in power plants and other industries dependent on this gas.

Frequent disruptions in the pipeline with or without the connivance of a hostile government could render these investments unviable.

The ministry of external affairs had been insisting that the Pakistan-sponsored violence in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be delinked from the pipeline.

The petroleum ministry, however, wants to take up the pipeline as a separate issue purely on the economic merits of the case.

Last week's cabinet decision seems to have given the petroleum ministry wider powers at least for the moment to negotiate on issues linked with the proposed transnational pipelines.



## LONG WAY TO GO

talks on a transnational pipeline. Clearly, Pakistan has nothing to lose if the pipeline project goes through since it will get the gas virtually free by paying for it out of the transit fee it gets from India.

Iran is desperately eyeing the huge Indian market, cornered as it is by the US. Even companies such as British Petroleum, engaged in big business with the US, are keeping away from Iran.

India recognises the high security risk and does not want to be associated with the

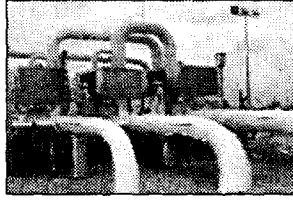
# গ্যাস আনা নিয়ে ভারত-ইরান চুক্তি হতে পারে জুনেই

নয়াদিল্লি, ১১ ফেব্রুয়ারি: ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইনে প্রকৃতিক গ্যাস আনা নিয়ে আগামী জুনেই ওই দেশের সঙ্গে ভারতের চুক্তি হতে পারে বলে আশা করছেন কেন্দ্রীয় পেট্রোলিয়াম মন্ত্রী মণিশঙ্কর আইয়ার।

আজ এখানে ইরানি রাষ্ট্রদূত সিয়াবাস জায়াগার ইয়াঘোউবির সঙ্গে বৈঠক করার পরে আইয়ার সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, “আগামী জুনে আমি তেহরান যাচ্ছি। আশা করছি, এই সফর পাকিস্তানের ভিতর দিয়ে পাইপলাইন মারফত ইরান থেকে ভারতে গ্যাস আনার ব্যাপারে চুক্তির পথে অনুঘটকের কাজ করবে।”

আইয়ার জানান, ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইন দিয়ে আসা গ্যাস ভারতের সীমান্তে সরবরাহ নিয়েই কেবল চুক্তি হবে তেহরানের সঙ্গে। এ জন্য পাইপলাইন নির্মাণ, রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এবং তা চালানোর ব্যাপারে ভারত যুক্ত থাকবে না।

ইরানের রাষ্ট্রদূত সিয়াবাসও



বলেছেন, আগামী জুনেই এ নিয়ে ভারত-ইরান চুক্তি সম্পাদনের সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে। উল্লেখ্য, ইরান থেকে ভারতের সীমান্ত পর্যন্ত নির্মিতব্য ২৭৭৫ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ ওই পাইপলাইনের ৭৬০ কিলোমিটার অংশ যাবে পাকিস্তানের ভিতর দিয়ে।

আইয়ার বলেন, “পাইপলাইন তৈরি এবং গ্যাস সরবরাহ নিয়ে দু’টি দ্বিপাক্ষিক চুক্তি হবে। এর একটি ভারত ও ইরানের মধ্যে, অন্যটি ইরান ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে। প্রথম চুক্তিটি ইরানের গ্যাস ভারত সীমান্তে সরবরাহ সংক্রান্ত। দ্বিতীয় চুক্তিটি হল পাইপলাইন দিয়ে ওই গ্যাসের পরিবহণ

কী ভাবে হবে, তা নিয়ে।

আইয়ার জানান, গ্যাস সরবরাহ ও পরিবহণ— কোনও ক্ষেত্রেই ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে কোনও চুক্তি হবে না। ৪৫০ কোটি ডলারের পাইপলাইন নির্মাণে পাকিস্তানকে রাজি করানোর ভার ইরানের। এবং ভারত সীমান্তে নিরাপদে ওই গ্যাস যাতে পৌঁছয়, সেই নিশ্চয়তা দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে পাকিস্তানকে বোঝানোর দায়িত্বও ইরান সরকারের।

উল্লেখ্য, এ ব্যাপারে কথাবার্তা চালানোর ভার দেওয়া হয়েছে পেট্রোলিয়াম মন্ত্রককেই।

ভারত-ইরান গ্যাস পাইপলাইন ২০০৯-এর মধ্যেই তৈরি হয়ে যাবে বলে আশা করা হচ্ছে। এ কথা জানান কেন্দ্রীয় পেট্রোলিয়াম সচিব সুশীল সি ত্রিপাঠী। তিনি বলেন, ওই পাইপলাইনে গ্যাস সরবরাহে বিঘ্ন ঘটলে অবস্থা সামাল দেওয়ার জন্য রাজস্থানে একটি গ্যাস মজুত ভাণ্ডার নির্মাণ করা হবে। — পি টি আই



# Iran agrees to deliver gas at Indian border

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 17

IN a major boost to the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, Iran has agreed to have the delivery point of the gas at the Indian border. This means that India will not be in any way involved with the laying and operation of the pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and it will be Iran's responsibility to deliver the gas on the Indian border.

India, then in turn, can connect its proposed national gas grid and push the gas in the grid after picking it from the border. As far as the pipeline from Iran to Pakistan till the Indian border is concerned, the risk is likely to be borne by Iran and Pakistan.

This breakthrough was achieved in the ongoing discussions between India and Iran recently in New Delhi. Gail led the Indian delegation in talks with the National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) whose officials were in New Delhi to discuss the issue during the last two days.

GAIL CMD, Proshanto Banerjee told *The Indian Express*: "This is a major break-

through on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline". However, Banerjee clarified that if the Indian firms want to be involved in the complete pipeline, they can do so.

According to Gail officials, the company will provide all information related to Indian side for completing the detailed feasibility study for the pipeline, which is expected to be completed by June this year. It is also likely that negotiations for the delivered price of gas at the Indian border will be concluded by June 2005.

The two sides will again meet in Tehran later this month to examine critical commercial conditions such as quantity, price and security of supplies, delivery point and alternative routes of supplying the gas to the Indian border. The road map in respect of specific stages of the proposal as well as the terms sheet are also likely to be finalised during this meeting. According to Gail officials, "During the discussions, it was decided that a broad overarching agreement between the three countries involved (India, Iran and Pakistan) will be desirable to conclude the issue expeditiously."

# Iraq seeks Indian help for reconstruction

9/2/05  
New Delhi  
HT-9

**HT Correspondent**  
New Delhi, February 4

WITHIN DAYS of the successful conduct of elections in Iraq and a day after it appointed a special envoy for West Asia, India's formal re-entry into troubled Iraq was made easier with a request by Iraq's envoy for Indian assistance in the massive reconstruction effort in the war-ravaged country. Specifically, the strongly 'secular, new Iraq' sought Indian expertise in construction, engineering, oil exploration and information technology.

The request, curiously, came at a joint Press conference by US Ambassador David Mulford and Iraq's charge d'affaires Muayad S. Hussein at the hastily spruced up New Delhi residence of the Iraqi Ambassador, lying unused since the



**David Mulford**

US-led coalition ousted Saddam Hussein in March 2003. With the US having handed over power to the provisional administration in June 2004, there has been no request for any Indian involvement in Iraq since then, Mulford said, and any dealings now would be directly between the Indian and soon-to-be-set-up Iraqi governments.

"In the new Iraqi scenario, there are lots of opportunities for the Indian business community who can re-establish their old position", Hussein said - sentiments that will ease New Delhi's concerns about re-entry into the Gulf region where crucial strategic, energy, business and manpower stakes are at play.

The US-led multinational forces would, however, continue to remain in Iraq. Hussein said, "In the present security scenario, these forces are required to be there for some more time", more "for security than for political purposes".

India has described the holding of Iraq elections as a "noteworthy development" and has been looking for ways to become a player in the region.

# Big brother by side, Iraq woos India

PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, Feb. 4:** The new Iraqi regime, nudged by the US, today took its first step to woo India in helping Baghdad rebuild the country and make it "democratic".

Muayad S. Hussein, the Iraqi charge d'affaires in Delhi who has been here for some weeks, appealed to India for help to Baghdad.

With the American ambassador to India David Mulford by his side, Hussein listed the "opportunities" for India in the new Iraqi scenario and clarified that the Indian business community would be able to "re-establish" its old position.

understood by one and all," Hussein said, reading from a prepared statement in his first news conference in India.

"India," he said, "had been very actively involved in constructing Iraqi economy during last several decades. Indians have long experience in working in that region and Iraq can benefit from their expertise in various fields — construction, engineering, oil exploration and information technology."

Mulford clarified that the US had not made any request to India since June 30, 2003, when it had turned down his country's call for troops to Iraq, but had kept Delhi informed.



Mulford and Hussein in New Delhi on Friday. (PTI)

en India and the Iraqi government," he said.

Mulford's attempt to distance himself from the Iraqi offers notwithstanding, his presence beside Hussein was a clear indicator that Washington had endorsed Baghdad's plan.

opportunity to underline the Iraq poll's clear message to sceptics who doubted whether polls could be held there. "It is time to respect the accomplishment of this election and embrace its implications."

Foreign secretary Shyam Saran has emphasised that India would not send its workers back for reconstruction work in Iraq unless Delhi is convinced of a marked improvement in the security situation there.

Almost echoing the US, Hussein said: "Last Sunday, the world witnessed an unprecedented election in Iraq where a large number of voters used their political franchise for the first time in more than

especially after the January 30 polls in Iraq — is to get its support for the current move and thus rally many other countries to help democratise Iraq.

India has welcomed the election but said it was still closely watching the evolving situation.

Qudus - Iraq Azim

# PM plays to W Asia gallery...

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Jan. 29.

— Observing that the world cannot but be deeply concerned about the escalating violence in Iraq, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today expressed hope that tomorrow's elections there are held in an "environment of peace, with the full and genuine participation of all Iraqis".

He also expressed concern that the impact of any negative developments in West Asia could greatly affect the Indian economy and threaten its energy security strategy.

In an indirect criticism of the NDA government's West Asia policy, Dr Singh said: "Our domestic pre-occupations in the past have to an extent, detracted from our traditional focus," on the important region at a time which, "unfortunately, was one of the most complex periods in that region's history".

"The world awaits the outcome of tomorrow's elections in Iraq with anxiety and hope. Although this is the first part of what promises to be a complex process in securing the future of Iraq, the world cannot but be deeply concerned about the escalating levels of violence, and the increasing cost thereof," he said launching the Centre of West Asian Studies at the Jamia Millia Islamia University here.

"We cannot but recall the extent of sufferings of the Iraqi people over the past decade, in particular following the imposition of sanctions, and under the present disturbed situation," he said.

As a nation that has always stood by the people of Iraq, the Prime Minister said: "We sincerely hope that the elections are held in an environment of peace, with the full and genuine participation of all Iraqis in the democratic process."

Jamia Vice-Chancellor Mushirul Hasan described Arabs as India's "natural allies".

30 JAN 2005

THE STATESMAN

# Compass needle on West Asia

**T**HE appointment of Chinmoy Gharekhan as special envoy to West Asia has come at a time when the Arabs were beginning to wonder if New Delhi has any views on the extraordinary events taking place in that part of the world.

For over a year, New Delhi has had no ambassador in Amman. The Jordanian capital has been the watch tower for Iraq even before the Anglo-American invasion of March 2003. A former ambassador to Baghdad has recently been named for Amman but the Jordanian foreign office is yet to accept the appointment.

The security situation in Baghdad has deteriorated almost beyond repair. Under the circumstances it is just as well that the Indian ambassador has been recalled. But surely India has friends in the Kurdish north and in Najaf. Is there a system in place to obtain assessments from these regions?

I know Indians with direct access to the leaderships in the north and south of Iraq. Have these sources ever been tapped?

It probably reflects on the neglect into which the area had fallen that not one of the senior secretaries in the MEA has any experience of the Arab world. This fact alone places on Gharekhan a larger burden.

His credentials for the job are impeccable. He served in Indira Gandhi's secretariat, was permanent representative to the UN. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, as UN secretary general, relied more on Gharekhan's robust common sense than on any other colleague when the latter served at the UN. I have been witness to his tenure as the UN secretary general's representative in Gaza.

I cannot think of another official who knows the present Palestinian leadership better. Also, through his UN connections, he had considerable access to the Israelis as well. Critics would be in



India needs to evolve a coherent policy for this region

SAEED NAQVI

error if they saw the appointment as an indication of some sort of cooling off with Israel. To the contrary. Exactly because relations with Israel are excellent does New Delhi need to restore the balance lost during the NDA years.

This balance is essential if New Delhi is to take any position on the Israel-Palestinian peace track likely to attract global attention in the coming months.

Difficulties for the special envoy will arise on the other burning issue — Iraq. Since the appointment has been announced on the eve of the controversial elections on January 30, New Delhi's reac-

Kashmir, since 1973. India will be seen to be shutting her eyes at the brutalisation of a friendly people.

A UN endorsement of the outcome will, of course, make Gharekhan's job easy. It will then be possible to chant the mantra "sheikh bhi khush rahey; shaitan bhi naraz na ho" (keep god and devil equally pleased with your ambiguity).

National interest, of course, must be the primary guiding principle. But is it possible to pursue national interest if it involves abject compromise with the horrendous brutalities that have been unleashed on the ordinary

## Difficulties for the newly appointed special envoy to West Asia will arise on the other burning issue: Iraq. New Delhi's reactions will be watched

tions will be watched. Silence will indicate New Delhi's acquiescence in the game plan not clear to the US itself.

In any event, "silence" may not be an option in an era when diplomacy consists of soundbites. Anything that Gharekhan says on January 31 about elections held the previous day will be analysed for its bearing on Indo-US and Indo-Arab relations. If mayhem takes place and the special envoy says nothing that too will open itself to interpretation.

Clever leaks that the appointment is primarily for the Palestinian issue, will create even more controversy. Iraq was the only Arab country which stood by India on various issues, including

people of Iraq.

This week the world observed the anniversary of the horrors Hitler perpetrated on the Jews at Auschwitz. How will we ever tell this terrible story to the people of Fallujah. *is happening to us today.*

Every one knows that the elections on January 30 will be sham.

Remember that photograph of the British soldier standing on an Iraqi prisoner, one boot on his head the other on his feet. That is not all. The soldier is drilling a stick into the ears of the collapsed Iraqi. These pictures appeared last week and are in every detail comparable to horrors of Abu Ghraib last year. These are incidents that have come to light despite the occupation forces.

Just imagine what has not come to light yet.

What happened to the interim constitution Paul Bremer had sanctified in March 2003? Even that was not good enough for Ayatullah Sistani. It talked of Shariah as one of the sources for Iraqi law.

He refused to endorse the interim constitution. Now, we are told that Ayatullah Sistani, particularly after medical treatment in Britain, is supporting the elections. Whatever the ayatullah's vision for Iraq, Henry Kissinger and George Schultz will have nothing to do with a "theocracy". In other words, if the Shiites come on top, because of their numbers, the Occupation will not accept their ideas for a future Iraq.

In this framework, there is no room for respite from occupation excesses even assuming that some sort of an election does take place. I visualise more Fallujahs, only this time the Shiite areas will be the target.

If there is one person who can pull the rabbit out of hat on January 30, it is Lakhdar Brahimi.

Remember how he manufactured the interim Iraqi government on June 30, 2003. Well, he materialised in Baghdad's high security Green Zone as a special invitee of the Americans to help select an Interim Iraqi government. Out of his hat came President Ghazi Al-Yawar and Prime minister Iyad Allawi.

On his way back to New York Brahimi donned his hat as special representative of the UN Secretary general and made a glorious appearance in the Security Council along with his (or American) hand-picked foreign minister. The magic by which the Iraqi governing council became the interim government will be brought into play once again. TV cameras and the "elected" candidates must already be slipping into the Green Zone under the cover of darkness for the televised celebrations on January 31.

28 JAN 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

# India inks 25-yr deal to import Iran LNG

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi January 7

HERALDING A major initiative to boost energy security, India signed an agreement with Iran Friday to import 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum of liquefied natural gas for 25 years beginning 2009. At the same time, ONGC Videsh Ltd will participate to get a 20 per cent stake in the development of Iran's biggest onshore oilfield, Yadavaran, equivalent to 60,000 barrels per day, and a 100 per cent stake in the Jufeyr field (30,000 bpd).

Petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said the two countries have also agreed to initiate dialogue on term chart on possible import of Iranian gas through pipeline to Indian-Pakistani border. The discussions will be held on the eve of the Asian gas buyers summit slated for February 14. GAIL (India) and Indian Oil Corp signed an agreement with National Iranian Gas Export Corp to import LNG. OVL signed with National Iranian Oil Corp for development of the two oilfields.

Iran would sell LNG to India at a price linked to Brent crude price. India is expected to pay at the rate of \$1.20



Mani Shankar Aiyar

plus \$0.065 of the Brent crude price with the ceiling of \$31. This implies LNG will be available at \$3.21 per million British thermal unit. The LNG price for the first price would be fixed at \$ 297 per MBTU.

Iranian Petroleum Minister Bijan Zangeneh said in both the Yadavaran and Jufeyr oilfields, Indian firms will get a fixed rate of return on the capital it invests in bringing the field to production.

Ownership of the field would not be passed on. The Indian investment

would be paid back in the form of oil, the Iranian minister added.

"Our anticipated demand in 2025 for gas would be 400 million standard cubic meters per day. Our output today is less than 100 mscm per day. It is not possible to meet the incremental demand from domestic production and import of LNG and natural gas through pipeline was needed to meet the demands of the growing economy," he stated.

Zangeneh said the options of having separate gas pipelines for India and Pakistan as well as a common pipeline from Iran and bifurcating it to India and Pakistan were among the options suggested to the two countries.

Apart from these issues, Iran agreed to favourable consideration of a joint proposal by Indian Oil and Petropars for setting up a LNG liquefaction facilities with 9 mmtpa capacity in Iran. IOC-Engineers India would also submit an alternative financial proposal for upgradation of the Tehran and Tabriz refineries.

The original condition of the bid required a crude swap arrangement between the Caspian and Iranian crudes for financing the project. Both sides also agreed to look favourably at several other petroleum sector projects.